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MEMORIAL EDITION

OF

COLLECTED WORKS

OF

W. J. FOX.

VOL. X.

REPORTS OF LECTURES AT SOUTH-PLACE CHAPEL, FINSBURY,

SUPPLEMENTARY TO

THE COURSE ON THE RELIGIOUS IDEAS;

AND

MISCELLANEOUS LECTURES.

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REPORTS OF LECTURES DELIVERED AT THE CHAPEL IN SOUTH PLACE, FINSBURY,

ON

5. THE SCRIPTURE EXPRESSION OF THE RELIGIOUS IDEAS;

6. MORAL PHILOSOPHY AS ILLUSTRATED BY THE RELIGIOUS IDEAS;

AND

MISCELLANEOUS LECTURES.

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CONTENTS.

PAGE

5. SCRIPTURE EXPRESSION OF THE RELIGIOUS IDEAS:

I. The Creation 1
II. The True Light 14
III. The Omnipresence of God 24
IV. The Law of God 39
V. The same subject continued 50
VI. Faith 65
VII. Inspiration 80
VIII. Universality 93

6. MORAL PHILOSOPHY AS ILLUSTRATED BY THE RELIGIOUS IDEAS:

I. Right and Wrong 111
II. Duty 126
III. Reflection 141
IV. History 152
V. Poetry 170
VI. Worship 188

MISCELLANEOUS LECTURES.

Exposition of the Thirteenth Chapter of Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians 203
Moral Unity of God 214
Health of Mind 226
The same subject continued 238
The same subject concluded 246
Read your Bible 260
On the Doctrine that the Glory of God is the Rule of Human Action . 275
Exposition of the Second and Third Chapters of Genesis 287
The same subject continued 302

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ON THE SCRIPTURE EXPRESSION OF THE RELIGIOUS IDEAS.

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THE

COLLECTED WORKS OF W. J. FOX.

LECTURE I.

Scripture Expression of the Religious Ideas.

November 2d, 1851.

The service was commenced by singing Hymn 6.* An extract was read from Dr. Pritchard's *Natural History of Man*, p. 486. This was followed by singing Hymns 7 and 8.

The Prayer.

WE render the homage of solemn thought and of reverential feeling to the Creator, Lord, and Father of the human race,—to that unseen, to that all-pervading Power which we call God, the Source of existence and of life, in whom we live and move and have our being. We render to that Power our profoundest tribute of reverence and confidence.

We rejoice in the gift of existence. We would live according to the principles which we see inscribed on the works of the great Author of all, and ever render to him the homage of devout worship and of filial confidence. We receive thankfully—and may we improve diligently!—the gift of existence. We would be conscious of the high and noble objects for which it is bestowed, and towards which it tends. We would live not merely in the continuance, but in the cultivation, of those intellectual and moral powers and faculties by which our nature ascends to its true sphere—by which we prove ourselves to be the sons of God—by which we walk the earth as those who, by their lordship over it,

* *Hymns and Anthems*, used at South-Place Chapel, Finsbury; published by Charles Fox, Paternoster Row.

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may derive the means of subsistence, of enjoyment, and of progress from it—as those who have another and a higher destiny in prospect.

As we are the children of the Eternal, we humbly cherish the hope of immortality. May we rightly fulfil our relations to our fellow-creatures, and to all beings placed here, as portions—minute and fragmentary portions —of one great and mighty whole! May we look around us and above us with hearts full of admiration at the Power which harmonises all; may we look around upon our brethren—the entire human family—with sympathy and affection! For the sorrowing may we feel; with the glad may we rejoice; and to those who would lead men onward—to those who, succeeding or failing, prove themselves true to their own duty, fulfilling cheerfully the changes of their own destiny—may we render our tribute of deserved admiration!

With humanity, through all its different phases, in all its aspects of good or evil, may we still be conscious of fraternal relation, binding us together, and imposing upon us the sacred obligation of endeavouring, according to our means and opportunities, to render service to whatever exists.

We would look onward, with confidence and hope, for the advance of mankind under the guidance of that Power which has framed man for good and not for evil, opening before him the path of eternal progress—that Power which has shown in past ages how all things may be made to work together for good—that Power which is ever bringing forth high and pure results—that Power on which we rely for the peace, freedom, prosperity, and progress of nations—that Power on which we rely for the future destiny of mankind, and for the progress of rational being throughout the ages of eternity.

To God, the only wise, be glory for ever! Amen.

This was followed by singing Hymn 27.

The Lecture.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Thus we read in the first chapter and the first verse of the book of Genesis.

In the lectures which I purpose to deliver at the present

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time, I am led, by their purport and their objects, to revert to a practice which for many years I have, as you know, disused—I mean that of commencing with a passage of scripture as a text. As a general rule, I think the practice objectionable. It narrows the sphere of subjects for pulpit instruction. It confines us, Europeans of the nineteenth century, with our varied forms of civilisation and government, to the narrow and in some respects different range of topics authorised by the writings of orientals living in the first century, and in yet earlier periods. It is an objectionable practice generally, as it lowers the functions of the teacher from those of a critic upon scripture to those of a mere expositor. And it is further objectionable, inasmuch as it tends to keep up those associations of authority—as if sentences were infallible or true absolutely, in all times and places—which certainly cannot be predicated with any show of justice of a large portion of the Old and New Testaments. But there are, as I intimated, reasons why I recur to the practice in these lectures—reasons arising from their purport and their object. Since the delivery of those which were published in the volume entitled *The Religious Ideas*, several courses of lectures in this place have been devoted to the further amplification and illustration of the views of religion there taken. One considerable course consisted of replies to the objections urged by critics of various kinds—some Protestant, some Catholic; some Unitarian, some Trinitarian; some scriptural, others anti-scriptural. Another series endeavoured to trace the modifying agencies by which those simple conceptions which constitute the religious ideas, and are resolvable into the mental and moral instincts of humanity, are affected, leagued with dogmas of different kinds, with ceremonies, enshrined in specific religions, according to the bearing upon the common thoughts of humanity of the governments, the literature, the institutions, of different times and countries. And, again, in other courses, these views were urged in their relations to the history of religious thought and to the life and teachings of Christ.

One further point remains to be illustrated, and that is, the connection which they hold with the writings embodied in the Old and New Testaments. If the views there put forth be correct, if the theory there advanced be founded

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in truth, it was beforehand to be expected that we should find these and similar lofty expressions of religion in connection with professors of various forms of worship, and living in different countries and ages. We should expect to find these essential, instinctive, and universal elements of thought beaming forth through greater or less obscurity, but showing that they still existed, and that their existence was bound up in that of human nature itself. Now, this, I apprehend, we do find; and from the writings of Mahometans and of pagans, from the works of philosophers and of poets, we may derive the materials and the genuine expression of the purest and best forms of religious thought. Something of this I have endeavoured occasionally to show in the extracts which form part of the services in this place. They have on different occasions exhibited to us how men do rightly think and feel who yet would have denounced the religious names which now prevail, and who had little or no affinity with the specific forms of worship that now occupy the civilised world. And it is a pleasant task to show this, to tell the presumption of human pharisaism that it has no foundation in nature, that there is no monopoly of the spirit of real religion; that no sect or class of Christendom, nor Christendom itself, in all its magnitude and with all its light, can claim to be the sole possessor of that which best bespeaks the affinity of man with his Maker. They have raised the strains of holy worship; they have shown forth the praises of their Father; they have endeavoured to explore the attributes of that unseen spirit which manifests itself by the various phenomena of the heavens and of the earth; they have done so worthily: and in religious feeling we are joining, not a small band, but a great company—the purest and the best of all races and of all regions.

But if we find this generally, as might have been anticipated on the supposition of the truth of our theory, we may especially expect to find it in the Hebrew writers; for with them religion, more than in any other case in history, was interwoven with their whole scheme of life, and with all their modes of thought. To hold, to develop, and to teach theology—or at least that form of presumed acquaintance with the Divine which may be called monotheism—was the peculiar mission of that succession of bards,

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prophets, and apostles who flourished in Judæa, and eventually went forth from Judæa to teach mankind. We may especially anticipate that with them we shall find some of the most exalted views and expressions of what relates to things invisible and enduring. And this is what I shall endeavour to trace in this and succeeding lectures. I do not call them a course or a series, because they have no other unity than that which arises from unity of purport and object. Each will be independent of the others; but I shall endeavour, by the citation of various passages, to show that the Hebrew prophets had those great and enduring truths which appeal to the universal human heart.

Let there be no mistake. In citing such texts, I do not appeal to them as infallible oracles—I do not bring them forward as settling logically any question whatsoever. I enter not even into the views with which different individuals may regard such citations, and the different weight which they may possess with various minds. Be the book of Genesis the composition of Moses or of Jeremiah—let the authenticity of a work be or be not established—let a writer be or be not identified—let inspiration or revelation be alleged or not—I enter into nothing of this. I appeal not argumentatively to the truth of the sentiments which we may find expressed in such writers; I simply want to show the fact that they are so expressed—that, as might be anticipated if they are derived from the intellectual and moral instincts of human nature, they have been entertained and have been expressed occasionally by those who have walked the earth as grand and noble specimens of that nature. Thus far the argument goes; it goes no farther. It is only the fact that what is, as I believe, instinctive morally to man has had evidence of its being so by the use those made of such ideas who lived under a peculiar dispensation, and who believed themselves to be especially the objects, the receivers, of divine communications. And it was in the strength of truths such as these that the Jewish religion, in the later ages of its history, made its way—that it won Gentile proselytes, that it established itself in what was then the great focus of intellect and knowledge—in Alexandria, that it prevailed over the world. Its superior simplicity and rationality, its accordance with the great principles and tendencies of human nature,—these

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were the strength in which its missionaries overturned the systems of antiquity, and established Christianity as the religion of the most advanced portion of the human race. In this they conquered; and in many instances, both of the later and of the earlier prophets and teachers of Judaism or Christianity, we find frequent expressions worthy to be dwelt upon, to have utterance in our hearts. Their words were sacrificial flame, and they have kindled the offering on many altars. It is pleasant to us to feel that we can use, and use as the general language of thought and feeling, expressions which are commonly used by others in whose society we live; that we have common modes of utterance, though we may hold different doctrines, and take different views of religious history,—to find that there is this common ground in the best, the purest, and the highest.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Thus opens the book of scripture. It is a grand opening. It is the language of a mind full of majestic thought. It is language which seems adapted to impress and to elevate those who hear it. It is language which the noblest sage or the most inspired prophet might use in perfect harmony with his pretensions. It is language to which there is an echo in all earnest human thought, language which seems to be in accordance with the great voice of nature,—with rocks and mountains and the wide ocean,—that might reverberate from star to star, that might be prolonged from century to century. It is a real word of God—"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." It is the assertion of an assumed fact. Religions are historical or didactic. One form prevailed in earlier times; the other in later times. The authors of the Old Testament did not write that which they arrived at as matter of speculation; they recorded what they believed as event. And this is the general character of the religions of antiquity; they are historical, not didactic. Their legends tell of the divine progenitors of human races and nations. They recount the wonderful works of these divine progenitors. They record history, or what professes to be such; and in doing so, it is appropriately that the Bible opens with the sentence that has just been cited. It has been admired by heathen writers for its simplicity, as have the passages connected with it; and no wonder. One likes

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to feel, to receive, in the very first impression, that of which the mind of a being is full to overflowing. There is a passage of this description, and a very grand one too, in the New Testament, bearing the same historical character, as contrasted with the subsequent passages; I mean the commencement of the Epistle to the Hebrews: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds." That is the commencement of a real Christian speaking to earnest Jews. As his words flow from him, we seem to behold the long race of prophet bards that in old times had called on Israel to see and adore its God—we behold their dispensation, with its majesty, passing away, and giving place to one which, I presume, according to the views of the writer, was that of a reign of an incarnation of Divinity. We begin our addresses very differently now. Our theology has grown dogmatic, as well as didactic. In opening such a work now, we should commence with "Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic faith, which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly;" and so on. And there is a transition as remarkable going on in the course of centuries from the historical to the didactic form of religion, and a corresponding change in the language that would be employed. This is, perhaps, more strongly marked than any where else in the difference between the Bible and the Koran. Mahomet perceived that the time was come for religion to cease to be so legendary as it had been. The Koran, unlike the Bible, is not a history. It is a series of Divine admonitions delivered to the prophet of Islam, and of which he was the mere amanuensis. He recorded what God said; and it has been properly called a Divine monologue. But it is introduced as such a work should be introduced, with an expression of the sense on the part of the hearer of the presence of Him who speaks. Throughout the Koran Deity speaks; in the first chapter humanity professes its desire reverently to hear. The first chapter, entitled "Preface or Introduction, revealed at Mecca," runs thus: "In the name of the most merciful God. Praise be to God, the Lord of all

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creatures, the most merciful, the King of the day of judgment. Thee do we worship, and of thee do we beg assistance. Direct us in the right way,—in the way of those to whom thou hast been gracious, not of those against whom thou art incensed, nor of those who go astray." Thus worthily commences the Bible of so many oriental nations. It then goes on with its didactic character; and at the very commencement of the next chapter we are told emphatically, "There is no doubt in this book." Such is the spirit of didactic and dogmatic religion. That is a text that many a priest would like transferred to the Old or the New Testament,—"There is no doubt in this book." That is the basis of his theory, the sum and substance of his religion.

The succeeding scenery of the first chapter of the book of Genesis does not correspond in sublimity with this commencement. It has a splendid character in its way, but of a very inferior kind. We are introduced to a succession of scenes corresponding with the seven days of the week; they pass before us like a vast moving panorama. Light is created in obedience to the omnipotent word; the waters are separated below and above the firmament, the rivers take their course, and the oceans observe their bounds. Vegetable life springs up, animal life of different kinds is generated; and then man is formed with a higher degree of solemnity. But the whole has a mechanical and magical air. There is something almost theatrical in the sound which thunders through heaven, and the instant obedience by which the power of the mandate is attested. It is full of inconsistencies, of manifest absurdities and fallacies. We have light before any luminous body, "sojourning," as Milton says, "in a cloudy tabernacle"—the conception itself being as cloudy as the tabernacle. We have a mass of waters piled above the blue firmament, and resting there till heaven's windows are opened for a flood that shall deluge the earth. We have a confusion between formation and generation,—between the production by an arbitrary and instantaneous act of perfect plants and animals, and their evolvement from previously existing elements. Combining with it the history in the second chapter, we have man moulded in a manner utterly inconceivable and unworthy. We have the celestial bodies placed in a most

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subordinate and comparatively insignificant position towards the earth. We have a Deity to a certain extent assimilated to the human form and to human feelings and impressions, and who is ultimately fatigued with his work, and takes the seventh day for his rest. Now, all this cannot have been the exact course of things. We can demonstrate that it was not the course of things. The sciences have taken their stand, and have hurled down the gauntlet of defiance to such a narrative. The writer was no witness of creation, nor was his informant a witness either. Creation has gone on in a very different mode, in different circumstances, and through a much greater period. Or, if we were compelled by some extraordinary interposition, some demonstrative interposition, to take this for reality, it would but transfer the fallacy from the book to the work. Because we should then be driven to suppose that rocks were made stratified as if they had been formed by successive layers or deposits,—that they were constructed as if they had been the work of a long succession of ages, wearing away land by waters, and accumulating materials in the bed of the ocean, and there subjecting them to intense degrees of pressure and of heat; we should be led to suppose that animals were imbedded in these rocks, with all the appearance of having been once living creatures,—but that all this was deception—that they were made so at the beginning, that these were mere imitations of the grand operations of cause and effect upon material nature, that this was not real, that in fact the narrative was true, the work itself a deception, and calculated to impose upon mankind. This absurdity is what the zealots are driven to; the book or the work is a fallacy. And yet, this they endeavour to uphold from what they call reverent zeal for the glory of God. But that religion and science should be put in array against one another for deadly conflict is a thing utterly impossible with real religion, as it is impossible with true science.

At first these assumptions might be made in zealous ignorance. The writers of such narratives, no doubt, did their best; they believed, in the first instance, that their conceptions were correct. It corresponded with their limited progress in knowledge and science that such might have been the course of things, and that such were probably the operations of Divine power. But science would not rest

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where ignorance, theological assumption, or priestcraft was disposed to rest. Science went on with its discoveries, and the incongruity every day became more and more apparent; and what then did the professed teachers of religion? They banded themselves against the progress of science; they did so at an early period; they do so at the present time; and they will continue to do so until the truths of science, by their demonstrative force, overbear all opposition. Why, can we doubt that there are now many men, enlightened men too,—at least, enlightened in other things,—who, for the sake of the credit of the book of Genesis, of the inspiration of Moses, and the safety, as they regard it, of all religion, would willingly rejoice in the utter destruction of science—who would be pleased rather than otherwise if there were no chemistry, no astronomy, no geology—nothing to bring into danger implicit credence in that which they receive, and teach that we should receive implicitly at the peril of the salvation of our souls?

The strife, begun in ignorance, has continued in prejudice; and though, by one step after another, the onward march of nature and of truth has been held, the resistance seems to hold its fierce and unrelenting tone. It obtains not in dark regions merely,—in superstitious countries; it obtains in the most enlightened. The Catholic world had its fierce warfare, and made its martyrs, when astronomy invaded its notions. The Protestant world has shown a kindred spirit of persecution which, though not carried to the length of imprisonment, has yet been carried on in aspersions upon individuals, and in darkening their prospects, when geological science has made its advances. Now, all this is fallacious; all this is wrong. There can be no such discrepancy between real religion and ascertained science; and better that a writer of the New or Old Testament had no inspiration in him,—better that no antique mode of theology at all were found to be authentic or deserving of faith,—than that we should have such a barrier opposed to man's progress in all that makes the knowledge which, as it grows, opens before him sublimer views than any which can be superseded.

For there is a religion of science. Religion is not bound up in any oracles or creeds; some of our grandest religious views are derived from science, and could scarcely

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have been realised in any other way. Whence do we derive our best notions of order and harmony, of immensity, of infinity, of prolonged duration extending itself towards eternity? Whence do we derive all these, but from science, —from science more than from any didactic teaching,— from science more than from any miraculous history? We have these from oracles which appeal to us,—which speak the thoughts and minds of mankind, and bear their own character of truth and certainty. And what a Deity it is which thus comes revealed to us! Look at the vastness of these works. "The world shall be six thousand years old," said the ancient theologians: "two thousand to the giving of the law; two to the coming of Messiah; and two for the reign of Christ." And in these six thousand years they thought the history of the world should be bound up! Why, there are phenomena on the surface of the globe at this very time which show that for seventy thousand years its present form—the last of many forms—has existed; that, during that period, agents have been at work in wearing down rocks by rivers, which require such a time for the commencement of this our last and existing state of things,—there being precedent to this those immense geological eras of which no numbers can express the duration. To bind up these things in the dogmas of any religion or sect which professes to give the history of the world, its creation and progress,—to crib and cramp them within the limits of six thousand years,—why, the great Platonic year is too small for a measure to ascertain the past duration of the earth; and the Egyptian cycle is lost in that immensity!

Whatever the incongruities which may be thus connected with the sublime language I cited in the commencement of this lecture, it retains its sublimity; and it bears within it the enunciation of three important truths. It intimates to us, first, that this system of things in which we exist is not mere chance-play,—that there is mind in it,—that there is thought and living spirit in it; however dark our theories, a divine spirit moves on the face of the chaotic waters. It is something, it is much, to declare,—as the writer of this work, in a dim age and country, did declare,—that the world and all we behold, the heavens with all their grandeur, are not

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simply the theatre for man to play his part in; but that there is in them soul, mind, Deity,—the God who, in the beginning, created the heavens and the earth.

The second truth which these words intimate is, that in this vast system all are united,—that it is a system,—that it is not a set of independent formations,—not the product of opposed and warring powers,—nor containing in itself irreconcilable agencies or existences. "The heavens" and "the earth" are identified,—man with the inferior animals,—the conscious with the unconscious. Whatever the perception of the writer as to the extent of the universal system, he at any rate taught a truth which grows a more imposing and overwhelming truth with enlarged conceptions of that extent. We cannot too much feel that we are but a most minute and fractional part of this great system; and that in it every portion reacts on other portions,—every period is influenced by preceding, and in its turn influences subsequent, periods. From the smallest grain of dust to the mightiest orb which in the remote distance we trace in the expanse of heaven, all is one: they are bound together,—they are "the heavens and the earth," the creation of the one God.

The third truth connected with this is, that there is some peculiarity in man. Man is not formed as the other creatures. Whatever there may be common to all species, it is certain, according to the doctrine of the extract which I read at the commencement of the service, that there are peculiarities,—that there are instincts,—that there is something in humanity, which draws a broad line of demarcation between our being, and probably our destiny, and that of the other species of animals. We are more than they in the image of God,—we have more of divinity within us; a higher exercise of creating power, if we may so speak, is shown; and the hopes, the tendencies, and the anticipations which are so common in the human race, are as lights from its Father and Author, showing us the way that is before us,—teaching us that "the spirit of man goeth upward," though "the spirit of the beast may go downward."

In the expression, the intimation, of these truths, then, the passage I read is worthy of the place it occupies. It is a noble subject of contemplation. We may use such

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language in common with those from whom we differ very widely when they come to develop their views. We see God in nature; but not a limited, a vindictive, a partial, a jealous God. We see the infinite, the all-pervading Power. We trace wisdom and beneficence. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth;" and what will the end be? Literally, we can see no need of an end to this mighty system,—so vast in its extent, so harmonised in its operations. It does not appear but that the sun may shine on for ever, and the planets roll on for ever, and the light everlastingly pursue its course from luminous bodies through the vast abysses of space. All this may endure as it has endured. No transitory character is impressed upon it. But, supposing it were otherwise,—supposing there be any foundation for the speculation of an opposing medium, which in time may bring all this to collision and wreck,—supposing it be so,—that does not apply to mind, to rational life, lighted up by the great Author of life. It seems to have no such exposure to vicissitude and to destruction. We are told

> "The stars may fade away; the sun himself
> Grow dim with age; and nature sink in years."

Well, suppose it to be so; what agents are there to work such changes,—what is their power over the mind, over rational life, over those hopes that spontaneously brighten up within the human soul? Though all these things may fail with age, yet rational life may thence derive its juvenility,—though they are doomed to destruction and to pass away, in their destruction it may only find its own revivification, and may contemplate them, not only now that they exist, but from some remote period in the flow of future ages, when suns, moons, stars, and systems shall have given up their forms and arrangements, and have been succeeded by others,—when the date of all these shall be but as a point—as a remembered point—in the commencement of our immortality!

The service was concluded by singing Hymn 106.

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LECTURE II.

Scripture Expression of the Religious Ideas (*continued*).

November 9th, 1851.

The service was commenced by singing Hymn 1. Extracts were read from Romans ii. 14, 15; Job xii. 8; and Fénélon's *Demonstrations of the Existence of a God*, vol. ii. p. 90. These were followed by singing Hymn 13.

The Prayer.

In the consciousness of life—in the enjoyment and exercise of our mental faculties—in the participation of good, and in the anticipation of yet higher blessings—in our individual being, and in our relations with society—we look humbly towards, and reverently acknowledge, the Power which gives us life,—physical, intellectual, and moral,—from which all that we possess is derived,—the God in whom we "live and move and have our being."

Earnestly would we employ the faculties we possess to trace throughout the vast creation indications of that pervading Spirit from which all things emanate, and which is made known to us by indications of power, wisdom, and goodness every where abounding. We contemplate manifestations of the Divine in all things earthly. We see them inscribed on the stars above us and on the flowers beneath us; in the remotest wilderness which the foot of man ever trod we find indications of that Power every where present, and munificent in the bestowment of its bounties; in the congregated haunts of man, and the works of art and science, in whatever ministers to the grandeur of nations, we see the same Power displayed, working in all and by all, rendering the powers of intelligence and unconscious matter alike subservient to its high designs.

May we press onwards, and know more and more of that which, being infinite, invisible, and eternal, can never be fully comprehended by us! May we acknowledge God

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our Maker! May we express our admiration of those gracious attributes which are every where unfolded to our contemplation! May we feel the impulse, and press onwards towards perfection, and prove ourselves children of God in moral resemblance, as we are already by the exercise of creating power! Thus may mankind advance in knowledge and in goodness, cherishing thoughts of peace and love towards each other, forgetting the arts of war and of destruction, and rendering the high powers with which they are endowed subservient to the happiness of all!

Thus may we know the Deity as a God of love, and know also that "he that loveth dwelleth in God, and God in him." Amen.

This was followed by singing Hymn 3.

The Lecture.

We read in the first chapter of the Gospel of John and the ninth verse: "That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

Universality is the character of things divine. The proposition, in a certain sense, is true of physical existence. The light of heaven has this character, as distinguished from man's artificial inventions. The rejoicing city, bright with its illuminations,—Arabian palaces, with their splendours, real or imagined,—the blazing beacons upon mountain-tops,—the towers along the cliffs, that kindle up their mimic stars to guide the mariner,—what are they all but things of a temporary duration, of a limited influence, differing from heaven's lights as the creeds of countries and of passing ages differ from the everlasting and universal moral truths that are implanted in human nature! They kindle, they brighten, they fade; darkness settles over the place which they irradiated; but heaven's lights are still shining in their sphere. The sun each morning renews his strength to run his diurnal course of brilliance. The same heavenly lights beam down on prince and beggar,—on the crowded city and on the solitary wilderness,—the same that looked upon the works of mankind's earliest races, and have beheld their latest improvements,—which shone, indeed, before man lived upon the earth, and would continue to shine were his race exterminated. That is the true light,

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the heavenly light, which lightens every man that cometh into the world; not that which is kindled by art, can be restricted by space, and is dependent upon exertion for the continuance of its rays.

Now, so it is with specific religions. Which of them is not bounded in a similar manner? Which of them does not lack that character of divinity which is here described? Which of them has any pretensions to be the true light of heaven, lightening every man that cometh into the world? Where is the religion of ancient Egypt? Gone,—gone before its forms were absolutely disused,—extinct in some unnamed and unnumbered century. What is the date of Islamism, the most prevalent over the earth? It originated but in the sixth century. The mythology of Greece changed its character when it became the mythology of Rome, and was really another system. The light claiming to be divine shining in Persia, in India, in China, is variously coloured in its rays. The Protestant is still hampered with the question of the Catholic: "Where was your religion before Luther?" And the best he can do is to retort by another question: "Where was yours before Constantine?" The Old Testament was superseded by the New; and neither Old nor New is identical with the system which has since existed and lorded it in the world under the name of Christianity. And under that name there are as many various systems as there are different names for the other religions of the world. They come—they pass away. Even where the name remains, the doctrines and ceremonies, the substance, are changed. Every religion has in itself its limiting powers and influences. No religion is formed to be the religion of all mankind. Reduce to their very simplest the ceremonies which are known in Christendom,—strike off all that are peculiar to the Catholic, or to the established and episcopal Protestant,—reduce them to the very verge of what one or two simple sects may hold who abjure all ceremony,—and we have still enough to preclude the possibility of universality. What, for instance, is the rite of baptism? With a meaning in countries where teaching is carried on oftentimes by action and by emblem; with no meaning—and, therefore, an unfit ceremony—in countries where teaching is not carried on by action and emblem, and where the

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attempt so to carry it on is sure of not being understood and felt. How is it modified as we pass from warmer to colder climates,—degenerating from immersion to sprinkling! and yet, even in that form, it is not at all times fit for the tender frame of infancy. What is the other generally recognised ceremony,—the sacrament, or Lord's Supper? Obviously the institution of a country in which the vine flourishes and wine is the common drink; another thing, and a different thing, when it comes into a country which has no such luxuriant produce. Then, instead of its being the common food of mankind which is participated of in this commemoration, it is to the great majority a luxury which they taste at no other time. The form loses its meaning,—it is unfit for universality,—it is the religion of vine-growing countries, but not of those in which its growth is checked by unfavourable climates. The Sabbath observances of Christianity were meant to be universal by those who in early ages practised them. It was a design by which it was supposed that, in different regions of the most distant countries, prayers and praises might arise at the same moment towards the throne of God. Even now our missionary societies sometimes institute prayer-meetings to be held on the same day, and at the same hour, with their agents and converts in India. Why, the very child can convict them of their mistake. They need the clock displayed in the recent Exhibition, which told the different nominal times, at the same moment, in all the various capitals of the different countries in the world, showing the blunder of this supposed identity. Start from any portion of the earth's surface in an easterly or a westerly direction,—complete the circle of the globe,—and your Sunday will be only Saturday in the one case, and Monday in the other case. In these human institutions there is not "the true light, lighting every man that cometh into the world." They are formed for times and for places; they have not the universality which belongs to the common attributes and thoughts of our nature,—those high moral instincts which compel the great mass of mankind, in all countries and in all ages, to recognise a Divinity, to feel that there is a power within them and around them to which they owe their moral homage and allegiance.

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Some, indeed, endeavour to get over the obvious objection of this want of universality by speaking of it as a thing to be progressively accomplished. And how does this help it on towards the possession of any such character? The Christian often falls back upon this notion. Many other religionists are wiser, and are content to think that, whilst they have their own system, other countries and other races may have theirs also; and that the universal Father may have such impartial regards as not to despise offerings varying according to the varying temperaments and conditions of his children. But most Christians will have it that their own system will be universal some day or other, and that its future universality is to make up for the argument against it, drawn from its partiality in the first instance and hitherto. The Papacy lays claim to the unbounded spiritual dominion of mankind. The Unitarian, at the other end of the long gradation of sects, often prophesies of monotheism spreading over the world as the waters cover the channels of the deep. Every class of Christians entertains the notion of its own specific destiny, —of its own charter of ultimate universality. And yet no appearances favour this. The claim of the Papacy has not been so obediently received and recognised in this country as to make the prospect of universal dominion within the range of common and external probability. The efforts of Unitarians, or other small sects, have given them no particular relative advantage over the great majority of professing Christians. And, taking Christianity as a whole, what is proselytism doing for it in the way of extension? What has it done for ages? How has Christianity advanced over the surface of the globe, with a few very trifling exceptions, but by colonisation, and that alone, for many centuries? And even if this universality were to be some day accomplished,—if all the world were, by some hitherto unknown interposition, to be Christianised,—that would not constitute a proper universality. Think of the generations that have gone before us! A light lightening every man that shall come into the world after the thirtieth or fortieth century of the Christian era will have little claim to be regarded as a universal light. What uncounted and countless myriads have gone without ever seeing its beams! Were they to rise again, and be contem-

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poraneous with that universally Christianised earth, they would be the great majority,—an overwhelming majority over all the rest; still showing the partiality of the system, still withholding from it the character of being "the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

It may be said that the writer of these words entertained no conceptions of this kind. Perhaps not to the extent to which I am describing them; but certainly he had some glimpse of the extent, and of the essential nature of the connection, by which universality belongs to things divine. Whether he was comparing the ministry of Christ with that of John the Baptist, as being much more adapted to mankind at large,—whether he was comparing Christianity with Judaism, as a religion not bounded by the limits of race or of country,—or whether he meant to compare the religious teachings generally of his day with the dictates of that eternal Word which was in the beginning with God, and was God,—any way, it is evident that his mind was ascending towards the conception of proper universality as the mark of that which is divine. This great truth beams out in a passage which is full of obscurities. All around it we find assertions capable of the most different interpretations. We find work for the controversialist; we find arms for the sectarian; we find difficulties for the expositor; but, amid them all, this phrase shines up like a heaven-kindled light: "The true light is that which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

We cannot conceive partiality in the Creator; and if not partiality in the Creator, then not limits in any thing which is absolutely essential to the good and the happiness of his rational creatures. We can imagine partiality in a parent, because children's characters are formed by many influences which can never be brought under the most careful parental control and revision. Much is independent of all the means and appliances that we can bring to bear on the formation of character. It will take directions, it will bear colourings, which we may not be able to regard with complacency. There may be inevitable differences, making a difference in affection and esteem; but this does not apply to an omnipotent Creator. He who makes his creatures, and makes them

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what he will, by that very prerogative must be their impartial, as he is their universal, Father. And towards this the mind of man seems naturally to tend. We find proofs of this. Nations have lived and died without scriptures, Jewish, Christian, Mahometan, or Hindoo; but they have still had within them that writing on the heart which Paul tells us the Gentiles had,—a law to which they were obedient, their thoughts accusing or excusing one another. This has never been denied to man,—it has always led man to sit in judgment upon himself, and to bow in adoration before his Maker. A partial religion would imply a partial Creator. The word is absolutely inconsistent,—it jars in the repetition,—it is inconsistent with all we can conceive of the attributes of the Divine Being. They all bear upon the universal sum of being,—they are like that gracious light which, kindled up in heaven and earth, is full of gladness, and wherein man and beast rejoice, while the very flowers and grass of the field put on their brightest colours.

All partiality is an anomaly in reference to Divinity. The prophets felt this,—the old Hebrew prophets. They exclaimed: "Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us?" The apostles felt this; they asked: "Is God the God of the Jews only? Is he not also the God of the Gentiles?" They extended their views to those great divisions into which they regarded humanity as classified; and there is a similar tendency with the best-minded of all religions and of all professions. To advance is the prerogative of man. It is the characteristic of moral instincts that they should be made clearer and brighter by intellectual cultivation. Man and the inferior animals have instincts in common; the difference is, that man has reason, by which he can reflect on their nature and their tendency,—by which he can analyse them,—can trace their exertion,—can pursue their course. He does this best when freest from all disturbing influences. It is often anticipated that the world will advance towards unity in its systems. It will never do so by proselytism. So far as such a progress is made, it will be made by thought tending in the same direction, whatever the point from which it starts. Enlightened men in all religions will best understand those simple truths in which real and universal

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religion consists. There is the same progress in all the sciences. They all begin with simplicity; they grow complicated as facts accumulate; but the very classification and arrangement of those facts at length lead them to a higher and nobler simplicity, in which they rest. Thus it is with religion and with morals. When Dr. Channing lays down the rule of interpretation of scripture,—that we are always to construe it in consistency with the Divine attributes,—he implies something beside the book which he professes to interpret,—he implies a knowledge of the Divine attributes from something within ourselves, to which the written word is brought as to a test, and by which it is tried. And when,—as has frequently happened to many a Bible pupil who has learnt all his religion—as far as he derived it from external sources—from the Bible,—when his mind revolts at the accounts of the massacre of the Canaanites by the Israelites, and other things which are recorded there without blame, and even with praise,—what is this but the moral sense within him, which cannot but feel that there is a higher power and a more divine authority? In the one case there is a light which may have shed much light upon the world; in the other, there is that "true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

We are told of a tendency towards this simplicity in Mahometan countries. It has been manifested by the more intelligent of professed Islamites. We are told of it amongst the Hindoos, where the pure theology of their ancient Veds finds superior acceptance with many to all the philosophising on their multitudinous mythology. We see symptoms of it in Christianity, amongst intelligent men of different sects; and we have thus the way pointed to us in which most probably the world is destined to advance. And if we find any where an intelligent man, most reasonable, most philosophical, in other things, with some strange perversion of thought on some particular point,—imagining, with some, as Milton did, that the Deity bore the outline of the human form,—imagining, with others, that God is a jealous or vindictive being, who for the sake of his own glory will punish to all eternity;—when you find intelligent, benevolent men, with notions such as these, depend upon it, they arise from a text,

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and not from a thought,—from an external word, and not from an internal, unwritten law.

If such be the fact,—if, throughout the world, there are not only indications, which he who runs may read, of something around us and above us, from which life and thought and happiness emanate,—if the very savage is not deserted in his ignorance, nor the most speculative deserted in his theorisings,—if every where there is in humanity an attraction towards the true, the just, the grand, the morally lovely,—here, I think, we have that true light by which artificial systems should be tried and judged. This is the true light spoken of by the writer of the gospel, "that lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

"Where, then," we may say to those who talk of the blinded heathen, of the millions of perishing souls in Hindostan, in Africa, and elsewhere,—"where, then," we may say to the missionary, "are your claims really to the superior light? You go to teach them to know their God; see that your own God be not an idol, fashioned from human thought, and bearing the reflex of human infirmities even, and human passions. Do not think that you have the only true light. That light has shone upon the remotest nations,—upon those whom you hold to be only sitting in the land of darkness and in the valley of the shadow of death. Learn to think more charitably of them,—learn to judge more truly in what consists the true light of heaven." We may say to the pharisee of modern times: "Cease to tell us that in your forms, your observances, and in your dogmas, there is saving faith, and there only. We see not things in any such light. Your language accords not with that of the still, small voice within us by which God speaks. We see only presumption in this claiming of such a peculiar possession and monopoly of what God hath made universal. See how limited it is. See to what a small distance the little candle of your faith can throw its beams. Cease to identify it with the sun and the stars of heaven. It is not the true light,—it lighteth not every man that cometh into the world." We may repeat that to the priest proud of his peculiar ceremonies, buildings, and consecration, his apostolical descent. He has the Christian spirit, he tells us, by

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transmission from the apostles. He and his class can give it, and they alone. They have watched it like a lamp in a monument; or as the sacred fire of old, enshrined and built up in temples. They have kept it, and to them must we resort, if we would see things in the light divine. We acknowledge no such consecration; but one which flows as widely as the light of heaven that marks its path. To us, not merely the observances which men have invented and which priests exact, but every thought, every feeling, every action, every spot of ground, is holy, regarded with reference to Him in whom all things exist, and of whom they are but emanations. Yes; you have built and consecrated your churches; to us, every star, every hill, every valley, is consecrate also. You have consecrated the grave; but to us, there is a holiness in the earth where the dead repose, and in that, too, upon which the living tread; and, whilst the virtue of your rites is confined within the narrowest limits, we look around on earth, and call it "all hallowed ground."

The service was concluded by singing Hymn 70.

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LECTURE III.

Scripture Expression of the Religious Ideas (*continued*).

November 16th, 1851.

The service was commenced by singing Hymn 77.

The Prayer.

At all times, and every where, we are in the presence of that Power from which we hold our existence,—which watches over us from the cradle to the grave,—which surrounds us, and is ever with us, although, from time to time, we are utterly unconscious of it. But now may our minds become impressed with the fact which is never ceasing. May we call upon the faculties within us to realise that unseen presence in which we live, move, and have our existence. May we speak under the feeling that our words, our thoughts, our intents and purposes, are perfectly naked and open in His sight with whom we have to do.

Let us, therefore, learn the necessity of truth in our hearts, minds, consciences, and course of life, that we may be what we appear to be, that we may walk as children of the light, abstaining from every deed of darkness.

In the consciousness of the universality of the Divine presence, may we resolve so to shape our life as to exercise our faculties to the purposes for which they were given us, as to gain more and more of knowledge and of truth as they are placed within our reach, as to realise more and more their benignant influences, cherishing love to God and love to man, while we reverence our Maker and render to our fellow-man that affection which becomes children of the same parent, partakers of the same nature, and heirs of the same destiny. Thus may the consciousness of that presence be with us in life and in death, sustaining us in adverse circumstances, supporting us in trial and in strug-

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gle, and reconciling us to that great transition by which we shall pass to other scenes where wisdom, power, and love will be alike conspicuous.

From the earliest ages we see that the whole human race, in its great march of civilisation, has had its course directed by an overruling hand. Mankind have been trained for their destiny,—led onwards and still onwards by that Power which made man, not to rest in ignorance and barbarism, but to subdue the earth and make the elements subservient to his will, and to reap a rich harvest of knowledge and civilisation, and to advance in peace, freedom, and real happiness.

Thus may the course, both of the individual and of the human race, shine more and more to the perfect day. Amen.

The Lecture.

"O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee."—*Psalm* cxxxix. 1-12.

I take this to be one of the most grand and beautiful delineations ever given of the Divine omnipresence. The writer's mind is evidently full of it. He amplifies it; but there is no lowering the subject by the enumeration of particulars. He expresses it in various ways, literally and metaphorically. They all subserve the common purpose; and whether we analyse the particulars of the delineation,

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or take its general spirit as a whole, it impresses itself upon the mind as a great and truthful outpouring of the soul from which it emanated. There may be some few of those drawbacks which, in a scientific view, must always accompany the productions of such an age as that in which it was written. We magnify the Divine omnipresence now—realising worlds and systems of worlds, an extent of probably inhabited space—altogether beyond the conception of the writer of this passage. God filled his universe, but it was a very small universe. Nor was his notion altogether true to what is now known of the reality. With him, this round world of earth was an extended plain, with heavens above it, with hell or hades beneath it, and surrounded perhaps by that dark ocean which the ancients imagined to mark the circumference of the habitable globe. But we can easily make allowance for views of this sort, which, indeed, still keep their hold upon language, because they best accord with the first and most obvious testimony of the senses. Still, any deviation from truth or fact is inconsistent with the claims which have sometimes been set up for every passage in the Old or New Testament. That which errs in science we cannot deem an oracle, a revelation, an inspiration. And if we look to the concluding portion of the psalm, objections arise founded on moral principle as well as on material fact. With pure and elevated views of the Deity, we cannot imagine piety expressing itself in the language of hatred; we cannot sympathise with a writer who shows his zeal for God by declaring that he hates those whom he regards as the enemies of God—with little reason; for what creature is consciously the enemy of its Creator?—but who feels hatred towards those whom he regards as the enemies of God, counting them his enemies, and being eager for their destruction. Still, with these allowances and concessions—needed more by the spirit of the age than by that of the individual to whom we owe the composition—it does stand forth as a marvellous effusion of truth and power. The writer evidently spoke in a spirit of faith; he was possessed by the notion of the Divine omnipresence; he traced it in all things, around, above, or beneath. It acted upon his mind in all seasons and changes, in the light and in the darkness. He wrote of it, not as a poet or a philosopher, but with that poetry and

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philosophy which manifest themselves in the utterances of a sincere mind deeply impressed.

And this notion of the omnipresence of Divinity is one of those simple and elementary truths which I have described as comprehending the materials of all religions; one of the thoughts which, with more or less clearness, are sure to arise in almost every mind when stimulated to reflection; of which man begins to have some vague notions, at least, the moment that he inquires,—"What am I?—Whence came I?—Whither am I going?—What power formed me?—To what influences am I subject?" Wherever men have been excited to this—that is to say, wherever men have felt any thing of the spirit of religion—some conception of this kind, some notion of a Deity not confined to time or space, has been sure to find its way into their thoughts, to dwell there, to become combined with whatever constituted the specific form of religion to which they were addicted, and to exercise an influence which belongs peculiarly to no specific form of religion whatever. Accordingly, we find indications of this same notion in the oldest mythologies, in the most barbarian and in the most enlightened religions. We trace it in the Orphic fragments which remain to us—the compositions probably of the disciples of Pythagoras—representing—it has been believed, after much and laborious research,—representing even the doctrines taught in those mysteries that, originating in Egypt, found their way into Greece and over a large portion of the ancient world. Some few of them have come down to us, and they speak such a language as this. I take one as cited by Dr. Pritchard, in his work on *Egyptian Mythology:*

"Jupiter is the foundation of the earth and the starry heaven; Jupiter is the root of the ocean; he is the sun and the moon; he is one power, one demon, the great ruler of all; he is one mighty body, in which fire, water, earth, ether, night and day, revolve; all these are contained within the great body of Jupiter. Would you view his head and majestic face? Behold the radiant heaven; his golden ringlets are diffused on every side, shining with resplendent stars."

There is another fragment of these Orphic hymns, which speaks a similar language:

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" The splendid lights of that ethereal vault,
The empyrean and the nether sky,
The barren sea, and wide-spread continents,
Supporting stately realms; the ocean vast,
The depths of Tartarus, and boundless lakes;
The mighty rivers,—all that earth contains,
With all the immortal host, the goddesses
And gods, and all that was, or e'er shall be,—
All these have grown, and are contained within
The all-teeming womb of universal Jove."

Not only do we find language of this sort in fragments, which were the composition of those who were concerned in sacred histories, they are to be met with also in the writings of the philosophers and poets of antiquity. There are many sublime thoughts in Plato and in other of the Greek philosophers,—many allusions in their poets. As Pindar says:

" Who hopes that aught he doth can lie
A secret from Immortal eye,
Sins 'gainst the power of Heaven."

In the " Works and Days" of Hesiod we find the same conception, although it is mingled there with the employment of inferior powers:

" Invisible, the gods are ever nigh,
Pass through the midst and bend th' all-seeing eye:
Who heed not Heaven's revenge, but wrest the right,
And grind the poor, are naked to their sight;
For thrice ten thousand holy demons rove
This breathing world,—th' immortals sent from Jove:
Guardians of men, their glance alike surveys
The upright judgments and th' unrighteous ways:
Hovering, they glide to earth's extremest bound;
A cloud aërial veils their forms around.
* * * * * *
For Jove's all-seeing and all-knowing eye
Discerns at pleasure things that hidden lie;
Pierces the walls that gird the city in,
And on the seat of judgment blasts the sin."

Still, amongst compositions such as these, the old Hebrew bard retains his position. He will bear comparison with any of them. The spirit of truth and faith within him was strong, even to cope with the speculations of the philosopher and the delineations of the poet. The passage remains unsurpassed, whatever may be brought into com-

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parison with it by way of illustration. And while the greater minds of antiquity expressed themselves in language such as has been quoted,—whilst they endeavoured to give something like a clear and lofty and comprehensive view of the universal presence of the Great Spirit,—feebler minds, but acted upon by religion, were pursuing the same subject in their way; and what they could not conceive readily at first as of one great power, they ascribed to many. There was, in the first instance, the identification of divinity with the sun,—"the eye and soul of this great world,"—the worthiest material representation of the unseen; or Apollo, who was supposed to guide his golden car, and whose far-darting beams pierced every place and work of darkness. Or they have recourse to the notion of divine messengers, swift as the lightning. Jove had his Mercury and Iris; and the Jews—falling short as the Jews generally did, in a large degree, of the greatest spirits and truest conceptions amongst them—imagined that their Jehovah had "the seven spirits" around his throne, and that he sent forth Gabriel, Michael, and other angels, on his messages. And when these notions of divine messengers and secondary agencies did not accord with their imaginations, then they peopled earth and sea with individual gods. Man could not move in ancient Greece, but he was in the presence of some divinity; he was ever before the deities of the flood or the field, of the woods, the plains, the hills, and the ocean. It is as if—the notion of Divine omnipresence baffling the grasp as applied to an individual—they endeavoured to make it up by an aggregation of divine presences,—by multiplying the observers commissioned to watch and to judge, to reward or to punish, men's conduct and actions, their speech, and even their character and thoughts.

One of the means subservient to this purpose, and showing still the universality of mind that realises something of the notion of an omnipresent Deity, was that of the power of consecrated images or pictures. When Isaiah, in his stern and lofty tones, rebukes the idolater,—when he pours forth volleys of scorn upon the man who takes the log of a tree, and hews it, and casts the metal for its adornment, and after burning part of it, and warming himself by the fire, calls the rest a god, and falls down and

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worships it,—the indignant prophet scarcely states the whole of the case. Humanity, we may believe, was never so brutalised as knowingly to worship mere wood and stone. Nor does it correspond with the fact, with the process of idolatry. It was not immediately after his own tools had done their work upon the log or the image, that it became the object of the man's worship. There has always been, as far as we can trace,—there is in India, there was in Greece, and no doubt there was in Judæa,—some process of consecration, some priestly rite or ceremony, by which the image or picture was supposed to receive the indwelling of some divine power. It was this which made it the object of worship, and this alone. It is so with the saints of the Catholic Church, that came in the stead of those old divinities. It is not every picture of the Madonna that is to be knelt to; it is not every cross,—though it be like that of which the poet sings, one "which Jews might kiss, and infidels adore,"—it is not every cross that has the sanctity of that upon which the priestly benediction has rested. It is worth the gold of which it is composed, or the jewels with which it is adorned, but no more. It is the religious power of ceremony that is presumed to give it its virtue, and to connect it with the being represented. Hence, the old Greek would worship the image of Minerva, in the faith of a kind of presence of the goddess herself in the image. Hence, the Catholic calls on the Madonna or on the saint,—not that the mere material representation is ultimately, and in itself, the object of the homage he renders, but because some ceremony has passed, some words of supposed power have been uttered over it, which form a species of connection—something like that of the mesmeric connection with the clairvoyant—between that which is visible and that which the worshiper is seeking, and towards which his petitions are rendered. In this way men have extended the notion of presence, and have supposed, not a mere representation, but a real and actual presence, and have thought they should be heard by the being who was thus exhibited to their senses.

Well, this may seem strange and low to us, but it has done its part in the world, and we should do justice to the idea which seems, I think, always to have been associated with it,—of something beyond the mere material emblem.

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Nor has the world by any means got rid of this notion; there is still something of divinity supposed to be separable and communicable; and I confess—with all the absurdities, with all the grovelling superstition, either of ancient deities or of Catholic saints—there seems nothing in them more staggering to reason and to common sense than there is in forms spoken of and practised, with a great show of reverence, in this our own enlightened country. When we smile at, or speak contemptuously or scornfully of, the image-worship, either in papal or pagan countries, it might be as well were we to remember our own ordination service,—I mean as practised in the Church of England, the professedly national Church. Because there this divine spirit is given, not to some noble image, some grand work of art, which might be deemed a not unworthy emblem or representation of divine power, but it is given to men, to living men, to the bishop and to the priest. It is communicated by the laying on of hands; divinity flows from episcopal fingers into priestly heads. And this, in every ordination, is accompanied with words that can scarcely fall short in strength of those which would be used by the priests that consecrated, and imbued with the presence of those divinities whom they represented, the images either of the Hindoo, the Grecian, or the Catholic world. Our Prayer-book has this direction in the consecration of a bishop:

"Then the Archbishop and Bishops present shall lay their hands upon the head of the elected Bishop, kneeling before them upon his knees, the Archbishop saying:

"Receive the Holy Ghost, for the Office and Work of a Bishop in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the Imposition of our hands; In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

And again, at the consecration of a priest, the rubric directs that the receivers shall be "humbly kneeling upon their knees," and the bishop saying:

"Receive the Holy Ghost, for the Office and Work of a Priest in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the Imposition of our hands. Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained. And be thou a faithful dispenser of the Word of God, and of his holy Sacraments; In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

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Now, here that very thing is done—is done through the living, erring man—which in the other case is done for the unconscious, but the unpolluted, image. If it may be done in the one case, where is the absurdity in the other? If the modern bishop may give the divine spirit, by the imposition of his hands, to the ignorant, feeble, erring priest, why may not the ancient hierarchy of Egypt or Greece have given a divine spirit to those majestic delineations of their deities,—so majestic as not to be unworthy of what they professed to be? Talk of the absurdity of transubstantiation; there is nothing in it more absurd than this. Talk of the superstition of idolatry; I would rather believe that a divine spirit had been given to, and resided in, the Jupiter of Phidias than in some of those priests upon whom by episcopal hands it is said to be conferred. These are men living, walking, acting amongst us; they do not vanish from the world, so that one might suppose they had undergone a kind of apotheosis, and become divine spirits or angels. Here they are, like other men, dealing in the common concerns of life, looking after their worldly affairs, walking and talking amongst us,—sometimes erring, sometimes prejudiced,—conflicting for the wrong, as well as for the right,—sometimes doing deeds which make their own believers and fellow-worshipers call them—however high in station—by such names as that of swindlers; sometimes making their appearance in our courts of criminal justice. And yet these beings, of whom we see and know all this, stand solemnly before the world as those to whom the spirit of Divinity has been purely and literally imparted!

Now, I am not straining this; I am not putting upon it an interpretation which would be disowned and indignantly repudiated by those who are the subjects of these remarks. This power in the Church, exercised by the bishop, has been made the subject of comment by a man of some note,—I mean the late Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Oxford, the Rev. W. Sewell, tutor of Exeter College. He gives to it the interpretation that I have given, and that in a work which has been circulated as a manual of moral knowledge and duty for the community generally. He says this of it:

"But I will rather suggest the vastness of the power

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claimed by the Church: a power which places it almost on a level with God himself; the power of forgiving sins, by wiping them out in baptism; of transferring souls from heaven to hell, without admitting a doubt of it, as when 'baptised infants,' it is said, 'dying before they commit actual sin, are undoubtedly saved;' the power of bringing down the Spirit of God from heaven, and incorporating it in the persons of frail and fleshly man" (p. 247).

We need—we can have—no stronger representation of the doctrine than this. In the same work he argues, so high is this assumption of the Church, that we may suppose, had it not been true, that the Divine thunder would have levelled those who made such an arrogant pretence, and upheld such a blasphemous claim. That is not the way in which Divinity deals with arrogance and with blasphemy. They are left to earn a quiet rebuke, and to a different mode of correction. They are left to the shock which they give the common sense of mankind, to the feelings which they are sure to excite in all minds where the rational powers have been cultivated; they are left to growing disbelief and repudiation; until at last the judgment of mankind will consign them to that tomb which awaits all false and irreligious pretensions. Priestcraft has not yet let go its hold on the world. It has aspired to something like the omnipresence of the Deity himself. We find it in the earliest and most barbarous ages; we find it in times and countries where literature is highly cultivated. It has shown its power in oriental regions; and it has also dwelt in the westernmost climates of the world. It has been found in every variety of condition. Its natural region was that of darkness; but even in the growing light it continues to exist, and to claim the exercise of its powers, and to assert its sway over the slavishly obeying consciences of many. But it cannot long resist the light, which not only illumines but destroys, and in which its destiny is eventually to perish.

There are two or three cases which I would notice, of the difficulty of realising this conception of Divine omnipresence, of feeble attempts towards it, and of the interposition of doctrines by which its proper understanding is really obstructed. One of these is the notion, so long prevalent, of a local heaven. A local heaven is scarcely com-

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patible with the proper omnipresence of God; it scarcely can coexist with the facts of advancing science. Where is it? The telescope wars upon faith. Point to any part of the heavens, however lustrous, and the power of the telescope analyses it, resolves those shining clouds into a multitudinous congregation of suns and worlds. The notion of a local heaven has retired before the march of astronomy, and seems scarcely to have any abiding-place. At first, it was just above the clouds; then it was raised higher, it was placed farther off. Events were connected with it, as if they were the mere records of that fact. In this spirit we are told of the corporeal ascension of Christ, and of his return in the clouds of heaven. Language, in some measure, by its imperfection and its adaptation to the expression merely of what offers itself to the senses, has favoured this idea. We have our "ups" and "downs," and so have they at the antipodes. But still, in all this, there is a discrepancy with a Divinity universally existing, universally operating, which makes it impossible that the two could continue to be received together. Hence, the one notion has been by theologians very often lowered by the other; and the Divine consciousness, as it were, of all existence and all thought has been reduced to the progressive survey which the human being might take. Something of this sort we have, which, though it may not altogether carry out his own nobler idea, accords with the common way of regarding the subject, in Milton's description of the Divine perception of the state of the world prior to the temptation of Adam. It is the description of progressive perception, and not a universal consciousness of existence:

"Now had th' Almighty Father from above
(From the pure empyrean where he sits
High thron'd above all height) bent down his eye,
His own works and their works at once to view:
About him all the sanctities of heaven
Stood thick as stars, and from his sight receiv'd
Beatitude past utterance: on his right
The radiant image of his glory sat,—
His only Son. On earth he first beheld
Our two first parents (yet the only two
Of mankind, in the happy garden placed,
Reaping immortal fruits of joy and love—
Uninterrupted joy, unrivalled love—
In blissful solitude. He then survey'd

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Hell, and the gulf between, and Satan there
Coasting the wall of heaven on this side night,
In the dun air sublime, and ready now
To stoop with wearied wings and willing feet
On the bare outside of this world, that seem'd
Firm land embosom'd without firmament;
Uncertain which, in ocean or in air.
Him God beholding from his prospect high,
Wherein past, present, future, he beholds,
Thus to his only Son, foreseeing, spake."

This is giving a conception of Divine omnipresence very like that of a human being surveying a widely extended prospect from the top of a mountain. He sees the plains and lakes immediately below; he looks farther,—he surveys the ocean, with perhaps some bark there driving on its devious course, like Satan in mid-air; he looks farther, and he perceives some distant shore: and thus is the Almighty depicted in this passage as looking on and on to a succession of objects presented to his gaze. This is altogether unworthy as a representation of Divine omnipresence and omniscience. Omniscience is utterly unlike this; it is like the consciousness of our own thoughts; it is coexistent with that which it sees, and knows things from the fact of their being.

But this error extends itself in a variety of ways; pulling down religion, as it were, towards superstition. Not only is a local heaven imagined, but localities on earth are regarded as in some especial sense the Divine residence. They go through a similar sort of ceremony—a species of consecration—like that which the idol image or the Christian priest undergoes, and then we are to believe that the Deity is resident there. Thus the Mahometan, in his prayers, looks towards Mecca; thus the Jew used to turn his face towards Jerusalem and the temple there; and thus some modern teachers would have churches regarded with a kind of reverence which has no religion in it, but which savours very grossly of error and of superstition. The pettiness, the materialism, the lowness of the thought, shows itself in the way in which they would recommend the expression of it. I do not know whether the author I have just quoted, Mr. Sewell, be responsible for it, but, at any rate, one of the writers in the *Tracts for the Times*,—one of that body who, through Puseyism, have some of

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them found their way into the Roman-Catholic system, while others remain entrenched behind the bulwarks of the Anglican Church,—one of them recommends, not only that every person should take off his hat on entering a church—which custom has rendered a becoming observance amongst most people—but that no man should ever pass by a church without taking his hat off! As if these petty modes of rendering external homage had any thing at all to do with religion! Language derived from these notions is often met with, and is employed sometimes by writers whom one would expect to have avoided it. Mrs. Barbauld has this phrase in one of her hymns:

> "When, as returns this solemn day,
> Man comes to meet his Maker God."

Meet his Maker! Why, has he not been with his Maker, and his Maker with him, through the week? As if the Deity were resident in a place, to which men must come, and to which is applied almost the common language of keeping an appointment! Meet his Maker in church or chapel! Why not meet him upon 'Change? Why not meet him on the battle-field? Why not meet him in the fierce collisions and the various concerns of life? For in all these is Deity, observing as accurately, and judging as certainly, as in any place of worship, whatever be the consecration bestowed upon it. So it is that death is commonly said to introduce a man to the presence of his Maker; as if he were not as much in his presence before death as after it; as if he escaped it by living longer; as if we knew any thing of the sort of perceptive powers that we shall possess in that unknown state of existence, which there is no reason to imagine will have any such diversity from our present perceptiveness that we can be said to see or meet the Infinite Being more than we can in our present condition! Yet this is the language held out very often to terrify sinners. Some time ago, an ordinary of Newgate said to a murderer about to be executed: "You will soon meet (or see) your God." "I see him now," said the trembling wretch. What sort of a Maker or Deity was it of which either the murderer or the clergyman spoke? We can scarcely imagine it one of which the conception would tend to raise or purify religion.

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There has been some help to the appreciation of a subject of this kind in the progress of inventions, and especially in one brought into tangible existence in the course of the last few days. The electric telegraph, extending itself across the ocean, uniting not only towns on opposite sides of the channel, but the metropolis of England with that of France, and promising speedily to extend itself all over the Continent, so that a thought in one place is immediately known in another, at the distance of thousands of miles, —this is a kind of human omnipresence or omniscience; it is the omnipresence of thought,—of thought which, in a thousand cases, promptly germinates into action. It makes all past contrivances, all speed of trains, all flight of birds, appear poor and paltry, slow and lagging, in comparison with it. Such material effects help us to conceive of thought every where existing; of mind, of the Divine mind, every where present at one and the same instant.

We find other helps to the comprehension of this subject—to the better comprehension of it, I should say—in regarding all nature as in some sense identified with Deity, —in seeing in every object that in which he exists, and which exists by him, and which we may regard as only one individual trace of the finite, which has originated in and is evolved from the Infinite. And in this view, such a conception of Deity becomes the most powerful of moral agencies. The eye—the emblem of Providence—seems to be always upon us. The silent stars look ceaselessly down, flowers gaze up; every where there are eyes, there is perception. Man feels at all times the great witness is with him, and the great responsibility is upon him. The doctrine has a yet further application; inasmuch as, seeing Deity thus one with his works, we have in mankind a great incarnation, the incarnation of Divinity in humanity; not only as dogmatically or mythically applied to Christ, but to man every where and always. We thus learn to reverence nature, and love it,—to reverence man, and love him, —to reverence ourselves even,—and that whilst we render to the Great and Universal Spirit our highest form of worship. God is in man—is in men—as he is in all things. The lowest and the poorest, the meanest, the most ignorant, the vilest of mankind,—there is Deity in him and with him; and we argue, therefore, that he is not base or worthless,

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not a thing to be scorned,—that there is that in him which will brighten forth, and which will endure to all eternity; for such is the lot of oneness with the Great Possessor of eternity. We feel that reverence and love are the emotions that should ever be with us, as we gaze abroad on nature, as we look up to the heavens; as we retire within our own minds, as it were, for the purposes of reflection; as we look back to the history of the world, or onward to the future destiny either of individuals or of the entire race. We see God in every thing, and every thing in God; and that is the pledge of knowledge, of happiness, of life, and of everlasting progress.

The service was concluded by singing Hymn 104.

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LECTURE IV.

Scripture Expression of the Religious Ideas (*continued*).

November 23d, 1851.

The service was commenced by singing Hymn 45.

The Prayer.

May we contemplate that Power which built this mighty system and all things in which we exist, raising the mountains, stretching abroad the plains, calling forth the ocean, and kindling up the lights of heaven! To the great Creator of all things, in whom and by whom all things exist, we render our adoration in humility and filial confidence.

We worship that God who has caused all things to obey those laws which are impressed in all varieties of nature, who has given unity and harmony to universal being. We reverence and adore that Power which causes worlds to revolve, and brings systems into union with each other; and through all the extent of worlds and suns and stars preserves the same order and pervading harmony, and invites man to its contemplation, that, in studying the laws of its nature, he may learn those also of his own moral being.

We reverence the God who raises up his creatures to be the instructors of their fellows—who gives to poets, philosophers, and prophets their power of teaching, and causes their voices to resound through long ages—who bestows on these later times the wisdom of former days, making us rich with the spoils of the times that are past, and enabling us to anticipate the future.

We rejoice in that God who orders all things in wisdom and in mercy, kindling up within us kindliness between man and man, and inscribing in our hearts those laws

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which teach us to live, not for ourselves only, but for our fellow-creatures, to unite our happiness with theirs, and in the great sum of good to reap the noblest individual recompense to which we can aspire.

May we endeavour to understand more and more of that perfect Being whose children we are, on whom we rely, to whom we are indebted for life, breath, and all things, and from whom we anticipate yet nobler gifts in coming ages; may we delight to trace the works of his ruling hand, in both individuals and nations and mankind at large!

May we see his providence leading on our race through all the gradations of civilisation, advancing in knowledge, freedom, peace, and goodness; and may we exercise the confident trust that yet better and brighter times are in store for humanity, which shall make this world again the scene of unbroken peace and love, uniting earth with heaven, and giving to individual mind the blessed assurance of future eternal existence and unbounded happiness. Amen.

This was followed by singing Hymns 67 and 68.

The Lecture.

"For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it."—*Deut.* xxx. 11-14.

The concluding chapters of the book of Deuteronomy, whether we consider them as history or as poetry,—as poetry founded on history, or as history founded on tradition,—are in every way adapted to satisfy and to stimulate the imagination. They present to us a grand picture of the dying legislator, the object of his life nearly achieved —so nearly, that to other and inferior hands the full consummation may be trusted. From the top of the mountain Moses addresses to the people his last admonitions

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and his dying song. Unlike the death-songs of savage warriors, it abounds neither in personal glorification nor in personal animosities. His hopes and his animosities are alike national. He sees the promised land afar off in space; and afar off in time he sees the varying destiny of his people. The scene is one of a class in which writers, both ancient and modern, have delighted. These dying songs of men who exercise an important posthumous influence over their fellow-creatures are read with avidity where the record is literally received; and they are the favourite themes of those who embellish record or tradition with their imaginations. We have many similar scenes in the Old and New Testaments. We have Jacob on his dying couch, encompassed by his sons, the venerable patriarch seeing in them the progenitors of the tribes of Israel, and delineating their characters and their destination. We have Christ surrounded by his apostles, on the eve of his betrayal, pouring forth, according to John the Evangelist, words of deeper love than in any of his preceding discourses, and leaving them his legacy of peace. And both in the histories and in the works of imagination of later periods we still find this class of subjects delighted in, and the best powers of the greatest writers exercised upon it. We have it in its various forms and phases, such as the last words of old John of Gaunt, "time-honoured Lancaster," in Shakespeare; the death-song of the Indian warrior, Outalissi, in Campbell; Byron's prophecy of Dante; with many others that might be called up to your recollection. They all show how the mind delighted to dwell upon this sort of scene and situation: and never, perhaps, has it been more grand, more sublime, than in that presented by the last chapters of the book of Deuteronomy. The old leader and legislator, arrived at his one hundred and twentieth year, his eye not dim, nor his natural strength abated, but still prepared for his change; when that which is commonly called a lightening before death beams up, before he is to sink into his unknown grave. The land of Canaan stretched out before, he viewed in long prospect, with the Jordan separating it from the wilderness; the wilderness behind him through which he had led the Israelites, and that Egypt where he had redeemed them from bondage, and that Red Sea which had overwhelmed the oppressors; the

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hosts of Israel below, anxious to commence the conquest of that country which they were to inhabit; with the long, the diversified conceptions of the future, of their future destiny rising before him, and portrayed in vivid poetry. Thirty centuries spake to Napoleon and his soldiers from the Pyramids—thirty centuries of the past; thirty centuries of the future seemed to have spoken by the mouth of Moses from the top of Pisgah; and there, having guarded his ashes from his own deification,—they being guarded alike by the monotheism which he had inculcated, and by the concealment of the place of his grave,—through all coming generations he joins the assembly of those to whom the world has rendered homage, and of whom it has been said that their memories grow larger than themselves, as shadows grow larger than substances at the nightfall.

The passage I have just read is a remarkable expression of the thought that there is no necessity to look far and wide, high or low, for the great law of life, the law of God. That could not be said of any mere ceremonial law, of the peculiarities of Judaism. It is not true of any ceremonial law; it is not true of the peculiar laws of any specific form of religion. It is true only of that great and universal moral law which is written in the heart of humanity. It is falsified by the known history of all other laws; for they do profess to come from heaven, and to have required some one to ascend thither or to descend thence, in order to bring them to mortals. They do come across the sea. Religions have their birthplaces and their transplantations. Some have arisen in Syria, some in Arabia, some in Greece, others in Rome; and they found their way across the sea, nations receiving their mythologies and their religions from distant tribes. They have their limited boundaries. They are revered only within certain geographical circumscriptions; beyond that, there is no dread of what is apprehended in other places as the worst which can befall humanity. Reverence for these things has to be artificially impressed upon the human mind. Those beyond the pale of Christianity have no fear that their children should die unbaptised; they make no sign of the cross to keep them from the influence of evil spirits; they practise no symbolical rites such as are used in our countries;—and even here, Catholic and Protestant differ, and one goes to his grave

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without extreme unction, and with not a jot the more apprehension of its faring ill with him in the unseen world to which he is journeying. Even in our observances there is the same distance. The Scottish Highlander tells us, in one of Scott's novels, that "Sunday never comes above the pass." In most places that is disregarded which is held sacred elsewhere. All is arbitrary, and all is enforced upon the mind with diligent care. It has not grown in the mind of itself, it does not spring up there of itself, like the great moral tendencies, or even like the common religious tendencies, of our nature. There is need of inculcation, of direction, of superintendence, of excessive care, to associate the notion of sacredness with such things; and those who strive for it, and who urge in justification of their ceremonial observances that man is the creature of sense, show, by all their struggling and striving to give a particular direction to his observances, that, whether he be or be not the creature of sense, they find it not the easiest of tasks to make him the creature of nonsense.

It was a true, a just, a noble thought, this expression that I have just read, whether we ascribe it to Moses himself, or to some writer of a much later age. Questions may be raised about the authorship of all the earlier compositions of the Old Testament. We know when they were first brought into their present form; but when they originated, through what changes they went before this, we have little clue to guide us, except that internal evidence which must still leave ample room for conjecture. It may be that these are only the words of Jeremiah, or some other prophet, by whom this book of Deuteronomy was brought into or towards its present shape. But, place it where we will,—place it in the earliest times of the Israelitish history, place it in the palmier days of Judæa, assign to it any date which we can,—the writer still evinces a strength, a clearness, and a loftiness of thought which should do him honour in our minds. For still he must have lived under a preceptive system—he must have lived under a system in which direct and arbitrary regulation was the distinguishing characteristic. He must have been trained to look for specific direction for almost every action of his life. He must have been under a system which left little or nothing

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to the free action of principles and tendencies in the human mind. But he sees through all this; he recognises something beyond this, and, mid all these laws enforced as divine, he sees a divine law, the natural law, the law of the God of nature, written on the heart of man, and claiming superiority over all others, and asserting that superiority by the fact of its universal recognition. For so it is. Men have a thousand religions; they have only one morality. In ancient times or in modern, in eastern countries or in western, the great outlines of human duty, the notions of human virtue and goodness, are substantially the same. They are the same through all these great European nations, however they may differ in other things. They are all called Christian, indeed; but one is Protestant, another Catholic, another owns the authority of the Greek Church. Here, there is uniformity of faith; there, dissent is abundant in its variety of modes. Here, the Bible is the most common of all books; there, the Bible is unread. They have different systems of government and of policy. Here, despotic; there, democratical;—here, monopoly triumphs; there, the commercial policy is of a more free and generous character. These nations are composed of various races: the old Roman blood, some of the Greek perhaps, Oriental and Western, Saxons and Celts—all are intermingled: here, showing the peculiar features of some particular race; there, exhibiting all blended and amalgamated. But, with all these diversities, there is still the same *morale* through all the great European nations—through countries and individuals most distinctly and diametrically opposed to each other; the same *morale* for France and for Russia, for England and for Rome; the same *morale* for Kossuth and for Francis Joseph, for Mazzini and for Pio Nono. They all come to the same thing when they point to that which constitutes human virtue and goodness. On matters of policy they may differ—they may be in violent collision; but there is no disagreement as to the essential principles of that law which is the universal moral law of humanity.

Nor is this less the case if we go further, if we pass the broad line of demarcation, and look at the Mahometan system. Speak as we will of what there is objectionable and wild in the Koran, still, no dervise preaches the duty of robbery or of murder. There may be much

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that is debasing in the system of polygamy; but there are provisions in favour of women of a just and generous kind. The civil courts of Turkey—in that spirit of rebellion against erring precept to which a just sense of the true and the good prompts the human heart—disregard the interpretations of the theologians when conflicting with their natural sense of justice. And a feeling of the sacredness of hospitality, a common character of truth and high-mindedness,—this that feeblest of nations has recently exhibited in the face of the strongest, and animated by a spirit, a known spirit, of hostility against it. We may go yet farther, over the plains of Hindostan. In the isolation of China, amongst savage tribes, we still find that reverence for the true and the good, and those views—indistinct, it may be, faint, and glimmering—but yet such as show that humanity is ever true to itself, and that its sense of goodness is every where the same. Why, when such a man as the present Bishop of Hereford, Dr. Hampden, guides his pupils at Oxford to the study of moral philosophy, how does he finish his preparation of their minds? to what fountains does he point them as those from which they may draw that water of life? He tells them to complete their studies of moral philosophy by the great works of ancient times, by Homer and Thucydides and Xenophon, and to find there an insight into the human heart which will be their safest guide. Nay, the Ethics of Aristotle are—or were, till a very recent period—the summary of moral-philosophy teaching of those who were afterwards to become the ministers and priests of Christianity. At other times the ancients may be called poor, blinded creatures, sunk in the night of heathenism and idolatry, and vials of scorn may be poured out upon them, and people may be told to look to them for a contrast with the boasted morality of Christianity in its brightness and its glory; and yet to their works the teacher has to point as among those best calculated to satisfy the human mind in its thirst for moral knowledge. Can there be a stronger testimony to the universality of that moral law?

What are the exceptional cases that are brought forward by those who have delighted to find exceptions, and who have taken pride in the paradox of finding humanity without a moral sense and tendency? What are they? Why,

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these even are cases which tend to show, when resolved into their elements, the working of the very principle whose universality the deductions of philosophy so strongly assert. They are aberrations, the result of error, arising from circumstances, or perhaps enforced by all the power of superstition. We shudder at the savage mother that destroys her female infant; and yet, does this arise from a mother's heart being dead within her? Is it not rather the foresight of a life of bitterness and misery, from which, having experienced it in herself and seen it in others, she would spare her own offspring, thinking their death better? Or, if we look to another country, we may see the Hindoo children bearing, in the couch from which he cannot rise, their aged parent, and placing him on the banks of the Ganges, so that its overflowing waters will be sure to reach him. Here, again, in this seeming violation of the common moral instinct, there is the adoption of what he and they deem the best mode of earning and securing his blessing. His work on earth is done; they place him there, on the borders of the sacred river, of the river whose waters are all consecrate, holy, and divine—they place him there, that he may die in the baptism of salvation. The immolation of widows on their husbands' tomb, the suttees that used to be practised, shock our sense. And yet there are, even in this, glimpses of the true light of human life. We have abolished the practice there. The abolition of it, although it was regarded as a religious observance, has been generally and cheerfully submitted to, because nature was on our side, and there was only superstition against us. But while it was practised, was there not this most unequal division, that whatever of crime there was in it was the work of the superstition—whatever of heroism and devotedness there were in it were the dictates of humanity? And such heroism and devotedness of affection were, in numberless instances, exhibited by those who sacrificed themselves on the funereal pyre. The exceptions, then, have their bearing, even in proving the truth of the general principle, in showing the universality of those tendencies which no doubt grow brighter with the progress of knowledge, more clear and certain and satisfactory, but which exist in the darkest states as well as in the most enlightened and civilised.

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And this is really a moral sense, a common tendency of human nature,—a result of which our constitution insures the attainment—call it by whatever name you will—rather than an effect of mere calculation. The common human sense of virtue or goodness is not arrived at by weighing results or balancing consequences. How is such calculation to be performed? What is its end? The immediate advantage of the individual? That is too limited. The general good of mankind? That is too vast. The end for which we ought to calculate can scarcely be brought within rational comprehension. And then, on the utilitarian or calculating system, what shall we do with those difficult cases that sometimes occur? There are times and cases which would puzzle the most skilled of moral philosophers. There is that very common one of Fenelon, the most Christian of bishops, supposed to be in a house on fire, in which was also his servant; and the son of the servant being able to save only one of them, the question arose which it was his duty to save; and what have not philosophers said on the one side and on the other? Even without the necessity of immediate action, with full leisure for consideration, they have often grappled with questions like these, which, after all, it is safest to leave to the instincts and impulses of the moment. Consequences have been sometimes said to be everlasting and infinite; they spread far beyond our reach; we cannot grasp them; we cannot make them weights in a balance; they are beyond us. The execution of Charles I., for instance: had it been previously discussed in this way, how it might have been said that such an example would admonish all kings and tyrants for evermore—that it would be a lesson and a warning whose impression could not fail to keep them within the proper bounds of their authority, and make them respect the rights of their subjects. It might have been said, on the other hand, that it would be sure to produce a speedy reaction—that it would only strengthen the force of despotism—that it would lead to more sanguinary modes of repressing every outbreak and struggle after freedom—that it would, by the reaction that would be likely to follow, even rivet the chains of the country that thus endeavoured to cast them off. Whether those who sat in that high court of justice entered into such modes of viewing the question, it is impossible to say; but,

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at any rate, they were not resolved by such considerations on the one side or on the other. They did better—they did justice, and let the consequences take care of themselves.

To resolve human virtue into mere calculation is to deify prudence as the sum and substance, the essence and the living power, of all goodness. It is to resolve robbery and murder into mere mistake, false calculation—a result of the system from which Bentham himself, with all his courage and determination of mind, sometimes shrank. We cannot apply such formulæ; we cannot apply the common powers of legislation. All the kings, the senates, the parliaments, of the world cannot make a virtue or abolish a vice. They may enforce some actions—tempt to them by the offer of rewards; they may repel from other actions by holding out the dread of punishments; but they cannot give them that place in the common, the universal human mind which belongs to virtue and to vice. That is entirely above their power.

We see, then, in this commonness, in this universality of the notion of moral good, an evidence of that tendency which has been traced with reference to sundry religious ideas. We see the working of the human constitution making its way, even under the most disadvantageous circumstances. Virtue and good are one, because the human heart is one—one in all stages of civilisation, one in all diversities of condition. Ignorance and want may dim it —tradition may belie it—superstition may mislead and pervert it—knowledge may expand and clear and brighten it; but there it is, still the same. Christ does homage to it in that memorable rule—the "golden rule"—that we should do to others as we would that they should do unto us. Why "as we would that they should do unto us," but because we have within ourselves a guidance to that which is true and right, with which, in their relations with us, we desire that others should conform? The worth of the rule is contingent on the heart of man being the best test and source of moral philosophy and guidance. It rests altogether upon that supposition. That heart which prevents the savage from sinking into an utterly animal condition—that heart which beats in the bosom of the philosopher, and keeps down his pride of superior acquirements, and devotes

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those acquirements to the benefit of his fellow-creatures—that heart ever beats responsive to the true and the good. It is the voice of God within us. It may be overborne by din and clamour; but it never has been—it never can be—entirely silenced.

The service was concluded by singing Hymn 129.

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LECTURE V.

Scripture Expression of the Religious Ideas (*continued*).

November 30th, 1851.

The service was commenced by singing Hymn 46.

The Prayer.

Earnestly may we strive during these few moments, while we aspire to hold communion with the Almighty, to realise that universal presence which is the presence of universal love!

May we render homage and gratitude to the Author of every good and perfect gift, to him who "giveth liberally unto all men, and upbraideth not."

In our own existence, in our varied faculties, in the circumstances by which we have been trained and kept from infancy, in whatever seems to us most gracious in the past and most hopeful in the future, in the heaven above and in the earth beneath,—in all, may we trace his bounties to whom we are indebted for life, for breath, and all things, and whom, therefore, we praise with our bodies and our spirits, which are his.

We would acknowledge and bless him as the Author of all good, and also as the Author of all seeming evil. We would recognise the hand of a gracious Providence in events which seem to us trivial and insignificant, and endeavour to derive from them those lessons which they teach us, both in sunshine and in storm,—that we may still be growing up towards the full stature of our being, still proving ourselves more and more the children of our great Father, almighty Protector, and Benefactor.

May we trace the order and goodness of that Providence, not only in the diversified events of individual life, but in the history of nations, of races, of universal humanity! In the progress of civilisation we see commingling

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the most benignant and the most apparently disastrous elements, forming the characters of nations, training them to knowledge, freedom, wisdom, philanthropy. Whatever promotes the enjoyment of the good bestowed in the present state of things, and is most conducive to our well-being here and hereafter, may we encourage. By times observing the plans of Providence, may we entertain hope for the future, both for the individual and for mankind, looking forward with confidence to the time when nations shall not deal in the evils of war any more, when through all countries the emulation shall be to excel in order and in goodness, and when men on earth shall recognise the power which framed that state of things of perfect good and perfect enjoyment which he pictures to himself as the heaven whither he aspires. And thus, through all regions of the earth, all classes and varieties of social condition, may men be as helpers to each other, as fellow-workers with each other, and accumulate the greatest amount of good.

In all things may we trace those moral laws which govern the moral world as the principles of material action govern unconscious matter. In all may we trace the principles and dictates of that power, the tendency of which is to make them more like that Infinite Goodness which gave them existence.

So may our path be as that of the just, which "shineth more and more unto the perfect day"! Amen.

This was followed by singing Hymns 126 and 35.

The Lecture.

"For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it."—*Deut.* xxx. 11-14.

I have again read these words, because they are full of suggestion, which could not be exhausted in the lecture already delivered, and which, indeed, would take considerably more

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discussion to do it justice. This language obviously implies a high estimate of human nature. It represents humanity as the shrine of the divine law. That law is naturally forming itself until it realises within us the means of knowing and of pursuing the path of goodness and of happiness. It tells us that there is something in us more precious than an angel could bring down from heaven, or than the mariner could fetch across the ocean—that there is that within us which forms the source of morality and the test of morality; that we are to look within ourselves, and not to any thing external, when we would try what is the good and what the evil of life. It gives us a far different conception of humanity from what satirists and theologians have often given; a very different one from Swift's Yahoos—a picture from which who has not turned with disgust?—or from those theologically described Yahoos, where human beings are depicted as totally and essentially corrupt and depraved, having in them no atom of, or impulse to, goodness; theories which, however needful they may be for theological systems, —which, whatever advantage may be taken of them for priestly purposes,—really do not accord with the common heart of humanity, but only have their affinity with the worst dictates of the knave or of the despot. Such views of human nature seem to me to be a reflection upon, an impeachment of, the Author of that nature. Those who represent the work as so vile, by implication hold forth not the purest or the highest views of the Maker of that work. God is honoured in his works, glorified in them—in the lowest, poorest, and meanest of them—not only in the reasoning, but in the most unconscious. And, indeed, this is commonly allowed. It is granted that Deity can make the sun glorious by day, the moon lovely by night, that he can make stars, and sort them into constellations. It is granted that Deity can make the rock, the mountain, the valley, the ocean, and make them fine and grand and lovely in their several ways. It is granted that Deity can make a perfect plant, a tree, a shrub, a flower, and animals with their varied instincts and modes of operation; and yet, when we come to his rational work, we are told that such work is altogether gross, unworthy, and polluted. He can make suns and worlds, trees, plants, and animals, but not a rational being, a being who shall have a will of his own, and yet who shall

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do the will of his Maker. Is this reasonable? Is this glorifying Divine power and majesty? Does it accord with facts?

But, we are told, man has fallen from his first estate. And are we, then, to suppose a Deity outwitted by a demon? Are we to imagine that in what we dignify by the name of free-will, or in any thing else, there resides a power that can counteract his designs, that can deface and degrade his works, that can interpose between him and that which his own power and goodness have realised and given existence to? And we are to believe this on what authority? On one of those ancient myths with which the world once abounded, in which truth was often made obscure by the mode of telling it, in which there were assumptions and allusions that the world does not now comprehend,—to take which literally we are to suppose a serpent speaking, and life and death contingent on the fruit of a tree, with a number of other absurdities which no sensible man would bestow a moment's thought upon, were they not surrounded with a specious theological authority—were they not advanced and repeated by classes of men who aspire to be the guides of their fellow-creatures from earth to heaven.

The entire history of man is the history of progress. He starts from a low point, it may be; but he is ever advancing. We cannot trace him back, but we find in his earlier condition defects which are gradually modified and which disappear as he advances in his course. Theology would reverse all this. It would tell us that man starts at the highest point of being, and that from that he has descended to the lowest. In doing so, it tells us what there is no analogy in history for, no indication of in all that we know of the human constitution. For man shows himself still in a state of progress, not only as to the past, but as to the future. Whilst looking round on this world, he finds no fellow there. While his mission, his prerogative, his destiny, is obviously to be its lord, yet he can conceive, and he alone can conceive, of interminable trains of being on each side of him. He knows how they descend from him, through the different gradations of animated life, to the very "brink of dreary nothing." But he conceives with equal vividness, though they be not obvious to his senses, of beings rising above him in a like interminable chain of progression. He realises the notion of those whose powers

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are more vast, whose benevolence is more fervent, whose influence is more benignant, whose duration is more extended, than his own. He can realise this, and he does realise it in his own mind, with as much ease as he realises the various gradations that are below him. Here, then, is the clue to his own history. He never was so high as these beings, whom yet he can conceive of; he never was so low as these other beings which are presented to his senses. His own place is between them; his own course in the past has been that of progress; and such he may reasonably conceive it will be in the future.

And look at what concessions those are obliged to make who take the depraved view of human nature, who hold that it is a depraved thing in itself, and consequently that all notions of virtue and vice derived from it must be erroneous, must partake of its own depravity. They say there is no virtue, no goodness, but by external grace. If so, we have no guidance to that within us; we have no test of that which is offered to us from without, we must take it upon trust. If so, the moral principles which philosophers have derived from human nature as principles of virtue may be principles of vice; nay, they must be so. Now, who really believes this? Where these degrading doctrines of human nature are most diligently inculcated, what is their real reception? They have a verbal faith, not a mental one. They have a conventional faith, not a real and active one. The man who, in the presence of his Maker, as he alleges, professes himself a miserable sinner, will soon show his anger and resentment with the first of his neighbours who charges him with actually being so in his life and conduct. Our feelings recoil from this view of our being; they acknowledge it formally, only theologically, only conventionally; really, every man believes that he has that within him which indicates what is good, and authorises him to judge for himself that which is right.

What a pernicious principle is this view of human nature! How it cripples the man, and deprives him of all moral strength! Where is he to look—what to rest upon? He must take all his notions, whether he is in the right or wrong path, from external authority. He must be guided by a book, or by a priest; indeed, they generally come to the same thing, because the priest is the interpreter of the

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book. Hence he is led to place reliance upon forms, theories,—to look to the external rather than to the internal, to the ceremonial rather than to the moral. He is in danger, in short, of becoming a mere ductile creature in the hands of another power, a guiding power at the least as fallible as he is himself.

And how does this hold in our knowledge of man in the history of nations? Great and glorious instances of human virtue there are, no doubt, connected with the Christian name, splendid, exalting in the very contemplation of them; but are they peculiarly so? Can we find them nowhere else? Are there not deeds which the theologian is compelled to describe by the strange term of splendid sins,—that is to say, sins according to his theology,—splendid virtues according to the dictates of his and of the common human heart? We can find such instances in the most heretical sects of Christianity; we can find them in what is called the grossest darkness of heathenism. They belong to the world; they are developments of human nature. The great, the good, the wise, have been found in ancient and in modern times—in Christian and in other countries—indicative of "that true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world," and which guides its best spirits onwards towards the path of excellence and of beneficence. What these theologians want, and what many other classes of persons want, is more faith in human nature. There are other things besides creeds in which we should have faith. Such generous views of humanity as are taken in the passage I have read, lead us to exercise a confidence in our fellow-creatures which may be disappointed in individual instances, but which, upon the whole, will be sure to approve itself as well placed. Had those who make and administer laws more of this faith in human nature, there would be less occasion for severity of punishment; it may be doubted whether there would be any occasion at all for sanguinary punishments. In the first rude efforts of legislation, the lawgiver writes his laws in blood—he deals death indiscriminately. What has been the progress of legislation? What, but to recognise a milder and a better system? What, but to substitute discipline and reformatory punishment for vindictive punishment? And how has this been done? Not by theologians, teaching a base view of human

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nature. They still retain their theories; they still tell us of a vindictive God, who punishes relentlessly and eternally. The common feelings, the good sense, the beneficent tendencies, of humanity, have acted upon legislation in spite of theology, and have produced a more generous, a more gentle, a more useful system of dealing with criminality. Had rulers more faith in human nature, would they, when there is the cry for popular rights around them, deal forth rights with a mean and niggard hand—looking at every class of society, and thinking whether it might be trusted safely, or whether individuals in that class might be trusted safely? A proper estimate of humanity would teach us that the more freedom there is, the more desert there is of freedom—that to give the means of expansiveness to the human constitution and tendencies is in itself to elevate those tendencies, and to redeem us from that vicious circle in which the good is not bestowed because the fitness is presumed to be absent, and in which the fitness must ever be presumed to be absent until the good is actually realised.

Had rulers more faith in humanity, they would rely less on that brute machinery which keeps kingdoms quiet—less on armed hosts, less on military mechanism, as a mere crushing power, neither thinking, reasoning, nor feeling, but acting like steam or gunpowder. They would rely less on that other species of standing army, which is yet more extended, and equally pitiless in its malignant influences—on the power of hierarchies to keep thought and conscience enslaved, or to guide them in whatever path they, or those by whom they are patronised, deem most desirable. It is by free thought that real religion and morality flourish; and, whether by the one species of force or by the other great masses of humanity are kept down and in a condition of seeming order, it is the real disorder of human things, and a strange contrast to that which would arise were there some faith in the good tendencies of our nature and of our constitution. To govern the world well and wisely, and for the happiness of mankind, faith in man is pretty nearly as necessary as faith in God—at any rate, it is a much better principle to rule by than faith in armies or in hierarchies.

There is an abundance of goodness in man. In the rudest, the most ignorant, the poorest, and the basest classes of society, we still find indications of it,—consolatory

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and hopeful glimpses, which should lead us to a better estimate of what our nature is capable of. God has nowhere forgotten to be gracious, or left himself without witness. Nor is it by arbitrary rule, or by a preceptive morality, that this has been accomplished; but by that morality which, according to the spirit of the words I have read from Deuteronomy, is written in the heart, and is there a living power. What does preceptive morality realise? It only affects the outside of things; it does not reach the heart, whence come alike the good and the evil of human life. Suppose a man keeps all the ten commandments,—cannot be accused of breaking any one of them,—that man may yet be cold, heartless, selfish, worthless. He is unimpeachable, and he is good for nothing. Christ seems to have had a sort of delight in exposing this species of mere cold, external goodness—of goodness in appearance. In that beautiful parable of the Prodigal Son, our sympathies and our interest are very much with that unhappy and mistaken wanderer; at any rate, I suppose nobody has ever read it since the Bible was a written book, and a book read and studied, without having some sort of disgust for the brother who stays at home, and who does all his duties, and who is most perfect and unexceptionable and unimpeachable—but whom nobody loves, in whom nobody takes an interest, upon whose character nobody delights to dwell. There he is; and in his person Christ has crucified the pharisee of all generations. There is another man whom Christ encountered, who had great possessions. He knew all the commandments; he was well informed; so far as creed and catechism existed in his country, he had mastered both, and they remained with him. He had kept all the commandments from his youth up, he says, and the assertion passes uncontradicted. And yet, what becomes of him? Christ puts a test to him, not included in the commandments, not prescribed by any written law of the Jews. He says, "Sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor;" and the good young man forthwith takes his final departure. This was a new thing to him; it was not so written, it was not in the law, he had neither precept nor precedent for this; and he had not yet learned that love which is the fulfilling of the law, and which makes and realises its own law.

Indeed, preceptive morality, tried by this test, must

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always fail. I grant that, if we were to pick out a certain set of precepts from the Old and New Testaments, and to arrange those precepts, it is very possible to make them a species of moral code, the realisation of which would exhibit to us a most lovely and a perfect character. But then, I say, to do this, we must make a selection and arrangement of precepts; and how will you make that selection—on what principle that arrangement? You go for that to the dictates of the divine law within you; by that you select, by that you arrange, by that you put together the maxims, and then present us with this perfect image. But it is the discriminating power, it is the combining power, that is the real power; and the proof of this is, that you might do just the reverse. Take another set of precepts. Suppose a young man, whatever may be his poverty, who, if any one asks of him his coat, will give him his cloak also,—and who, when taken away from his business and made to walk a mile, will walk twain. Suppose him so yielding that, when the right cheek is smitten, he turns the left—thus doing all that in him lies to bring the world under the dominion of brute force, recognising it and legalising it. Suppose him so improvident as to take no thought for the morrow, to say, "Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof; let the morrow care for itself." Suppose him so impressed with the command that we are saved by faith, and not by works, that he shows no works by which he can be saved, but goes to sea upon the sole plank of his faith, and hopes to escape shipwreck. Suppose him, when sore troubles encompass him, when those whom he loves are taken from him, or when his friends are in deep distress and look to him for sympathy,—suppose him then obeying the precept, "Rejoice evermore," and being exceedingly glad and full of hilarity. Suppose him, in a time of earnest struggle for reformations in Church or State, acting on the law, "Fear God; honour the king; and meddle not with them that are given to change,"—a text that was once placarded very fully about this metropolis, in order to prevent good people from voting for Mr. Hume, who was then proposed as candidate for Middlesex. Suppose him to obey literally the precept to pray without ceasing, and to be at his devotions, not only on Sunday, but on every other day, morning, noon, and night, and to pray so as neither to think, learn, work,

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nor do any thing in the world. Now, let all these precepts be thus accumulated, and what is the result but a most contemptible, pernicious, and miserable being in society?

But then, you will say, these are not the genuine applications of those precepts. One is to be taken, not literally, but metaphorically; others are to be construed in reference to certain times or classes of persons, and not in reference to other times and other classes. And then, I say, how do you know that? Why, you know it simply by this—that to take them in their broad, genuine, literal, obvious sense revolts the moral sense within you. You cannot bring them into harmony with the dictates of your own nature; that is the reason;—or why look out for limitations in these instances more than in a thousand other instances where such limitations might also be predicated? No; it is not in this way that man understands what is good. In Paley's *Moral Philosophy*, he sets out on the combined principles of utility and of Divine command, taking the Divine command as expressed in texts. He works out a sort of external morality which may be comprised under the description of utilitarianism, and works it out very well. There is a text and a fact for every conclusion which he thus arrives at. Now, what would Paley's *Moral Philosophy* be the worse if all those texts were cut out? You would have then the actions; you would have the reasons for those actions; but you would not have that which he adds as authority, but which, by the various modes in which precepts are modified, by bringing in circumstances of limitation or of explanation, may be shown to add nothing whatsoever to his arguments. The work would be as complete without all these texts as it is with them, and quite as available for every practical purpose.

Moreover, there is a mistake in many classes, who are very earnest for preceptive morality, as to the extent to which it would realise their views. For they always employ their own interpretations of those precepts; they do not give them full, fair, independent play. We have amongst us those who are extremely solicitous to spread the Bible over all the world, because, as they say, it will promote order; it will prevent revolutionary outbreaks and sanguinary collisions; it will fill the world with peace and harmony. Now, how do they know all that? At a meetingon Friday

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last of the Protestant Alliance, it was represented as a great and good result of Bible preceptive morality, that the attempt of Smith O'Brien a short while ago to make a rebellion in Ireland utterly failed. Now, that is a great mistake; for it so happened that Smith O'Brien failed because the Roman-Catholic priests would not stand by him. I do not mean that on that account he failed in his ultimate object —an impracticable one; but he failed in creating an insurrection, a rebellion, because they would not stand by him, nor, consequently, their followers. But neither the priests nor their followers are Bible readers. It was not preceptive morality which kept them back; it was a very different kind of power, and a different kind of calculation. So they say it is owing to that that this country was freed from the convulsions which shook all Europe in 1848. Why, throughout Germany, just before those outbreaks, there was a remarkable revival and spread of what is called evangelical religion, and of the knowledge of the Bible, with its precepts. And, indeed, if we were to look for a class of men most eminently well read in the Bible,—thoroughly acquainted with it,—most conscientiously and firmly determined to obey its precepts,—what class in all history should we fix upon but the Ironsides of Cromwell?—the men who had the Bible at their fingers' ends, who endeavoured to be governed by it in every, the minutest, action of life,—the men who were so familiar with the Bible, that they carved its texts with their swords upon the fronts of Rupert's Cavaliers,—the men who were thoroughly imbued with what seemed to them the spirit of its preceptive morality. Let us not look at only one side of this question. Those who wish the Bible to guide the people to Church-of-Englandism must send the Articles and the Prayer-book along with it. Those who wish it to guide them into the common routine of Protestant Dissent must send their creeds and their catechisms with it. We may find in the Bible a spirit of fighting as well as of peace. We may find there a spirit of Socialism—that great bugbear of modern times—as well as of reverence for property. We hear openly in our days of "Christian Socialism;" we find ministers of the Church of England, one of them a professor of divinity in a college, openly proclaiming it as the great gospel of the age, at the very time that others are looking

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in that same book for precepts to keep up the strictest reverence for individual property.

It is not by precept—it is by something higher than, and above, all precept—that we must try moral systems and moral conduct. "Who shall read that law?" are we asked, —that divine law, but a divine law which is enshrined in the human heart? Who read it? The savage its large letters; and the philosopher its obscurer and minuter types. The child may be delighted with its pictures, and the sage with its wisdom. Who read it? Our own feelings expound it to us; the faculties and the relations of man indicate the course of goodness and of happiness which he should take. There is a provision for sympathy in our physical frames. The sight of pain is painful; and there must be strong associations to subdue that pain. Our own nerves quiver as certainly as do those of the sufferer: and thus man is taught to feel for his fellow-creature as for himself. We have imagination, by which we realise other beings, by which they exist in our minds, by which the past lives there, by which other human beings exist there; and we endeavour to analyse their feelings and their desires. This, again, is a principle of brotherhood to man. Its almost involuntary tendency to a species of metempsychosis is the ground of that golden rule of Christ, "to do unto others as we would that they should do unto us." It is not the hope of heaven, it is not the fear of hell, that acts most powerfully in this matter; it is that more or less vivid realisation of our fellow-creatures and of their condition. The man who believes in no futurity, but who is benevolently disposed,—who has no doubt that all knowledge and consciousness will cease with him when his short earthly race is run,—that man, realising in himself the happier condition of the world when it shall come to a general state of knowledge, of peace, of mutual good offices and interchange, of progressive prosperity,—that man in his benevolence feels the earnest desire that such a state of things should be realised, works for it, works for it willingly, unobserved, without recompense, without pecuniary reward, without fame or reputation even,—he works for it day after day, night after night; he works for it as diligently as does the most firm believer in his own future power of looking down from the abodes of bliss, and seeing his visions accomplished on the earth.

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In that manner, all our other faculties have their lessons; they teach us sympathy and kindness. Our dependence, which we feel to be mutual, leads to rendering kind offices, as we hope to receive them. It indicates, even to the most selfish, that such is the natural, the right, the wisest course for us to pursue. And the veneration to which we are prone—and which is considered by so many philosophers as an essential portion of our nature, even provided for by the physical constitution of our being—teaches us to worship. The law within us is not so obscure but that there is always an external index or sign pointing towards the course which it directs. There is this even in defiance of the commands of superstition. It is related of an old Egyptian king that once the gods appeared to him in vision; and they commanded him to massacre all the nobles of his kingdom, by doing which he might perhaps have established a more absolute command and authority than he at that time possessed. The next morning, it is said, this old Egyptian king resigned his crown; for the gods, he said, had commanded him a manifest immorality, which he declined to perpetrate; and he presumed that such a morally impossible command was an indication of their will that he should reign no longer. There was a true interpreter of the law within us, of that law within which is paramount to all law without, to all the dictates of external objects. Were we to look thus at morality, at virtue, it would remove a great deal of difficulty that impedes the progress of improvement, and especially that obstructs the extension of education in this country. It would show that there must be, in the natural course of things, a morality inculcated, although theology should be comparatively disregarded. It would show the truth of those representations, not infrequent in the Old and New Testaments, where the very birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, where the heavens above us and the flowers beneath us, are all represented as indicating the path of duty and of goodness. But, with a strange perversity, we forego this means of union and this prospect of usefulness, because we assume that religion only—and by religion we mean a sectarian theology—can bear such fruit. The facts testify against it. Where the catechism is most taught, crime is not the most diminished. It is where education is the most expansive, as

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in Ireland, that its effect is felt upon the number of criminals; not in this country, where it is so much more exclusively of a catechising and dogmatising character. Thus we abuse what should be the machinery of goodness. Thirty thousand pulpits, or thereabouts, are occupied in this country, perhaps, at this very moment: in how many of them is the development of that law which is written in the heart the great subject of instruction? In how many of them are the dictates of that law the great theme of discussion, of illustration, and of recommendation? We have every reason to suppose that a most insignificant deduction must be made from the great number of those in which dogmas that can bear little or no fruit, if they be ever so true or earnestly insisted upon, are put in the place of all good, of all knowledge, of all happiness. It should be the aim of each to realise externally that law of our own nature which dwells within,—not by accumulating precepts, but by forming our own ideal of the good, the true, the morally beautiful, and contemplating it lovingly, so that our very nature is led on to its realisation. Why is it commonly said that example is more powerful than precept? Example does not command; example does not promise; example does not threaten; example works by none of the machinery of merely preceptive morality; but it puts before us a beautiful picture; it invites us to the contemplation; and the very pleasure of that contemplation indicates the moral power within thus, at moulds us to some sort of resemblance with it.

Thus it is that by being true to ourselves, to what is best in us and for us, we shall most realise the dictates of morality, of virtue, or by whatever name we call that which assimilates human character to our conception of the Divinity. To do this, we have only to harmonise with all existence. True to their own nature and its laws, the stars shine in their courses as they have shone from the beginning; they hold each their sphere; they pour down their influences on the modern astronomer as on the Chaldean shepherd of old; they are rich in their lessons alike for the wise and for the ignorant. They resume their course in the succession of great Nature's teaching;

> "And darkness shows us worlds of light
> We never saw by day."

True to his own nature and the laws of that nature, the

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sun retains his position and his power; he acts on the planetary system around him; by that force of which he is the central power, it is kept in its primeval order, it fulfils its destiny. His influences are never wanting; his light gladdens and animates in all these worlds and all their satellites; and by his brightness it is "always morning somewhere on the earth" and in all worlds that obey his power. By this truth to itself and to its own nature, though unconscious, the earth revolves in its orbit; it brings about that uniform variety, that harmonious sequence of the seasons, on which so much depends for man, physically, intellectually, and morally; it grows not old, but retains its diversity and beauty, and yields its stores for human good. By this truth to their nature and to the laws of that nature, the very products of the earth, its trees and plants and flowers, all spread themselves according to their being, and exhale their fragrance, and bear their fruits; and their falling leaves fertilise the soil for yet richer and lovelier products. By this truth to their own nature, the inferior animals fulfil their course,—the wildest and the tamest, the most solitary and the most gregarious; they occupy their appointed sphere,—or they spread over the world from those central abodes which seem to have been their original habitation; they give way to the advances of humanity; and the strong yield their strength, and the swift their swiftness, to his mightier intelligence. And by truth to his own nature and to the laws of that nature, man also enjoys the blessings of his position; man fulfils the destiny which, as well as the law, is inscribed upon his heart. In truth to his nature and its laws he thinks and feels, he loves, he worships, and he aspires. By this truth he realises a higher bliss than could be brought down from heaven, or borne across the sea. By this he himself crosses the sea, and extends his dominion into the wilderness. By this he knows the heavens, and analyses and measures the orbs that revolve there. By this he looks around with joy and beneficence; by this he looks up with hope; by this his nature advances in its progress from the animal to the spiritual; by this he goes onward, through the mists and darkness of mortality, to the light of eternal ages.

The service was concluded by singing Hymn 123.

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LECTURE VI.

Scripture Expression of the Religious Ideas (*continued*).

December 7th, 1851.

The service was commenced by singing Hymns 34 and 90.

The Prayer.

We worship the Creator of all things,—the universal Lord and Father of our spirits,—the Giver of every good and perfect gift.

We worship God, who doeth according to His will amongst the spirits of heaven and the inhabitants of earth,—whose hand kindles up suns and worlds, and rolls planets in their courses, and bestows upon us the ceaseless and beneficent variety of the seasons,—who gives heat and cold, summer and winter,—who creates the light and the darkness,—whom we reverence in all the infinity of His inscrutable wisdom and His unceasing benevolence.

We worship God, who bringeth light out of darkness, and order out of confusion. In the darkest trials of individual life,—in the disappointment of the hopes of humanity,—in the retrograde movement of nations, or apparently of all mankind,—we would still acknowledge, and endeavour to trace, that guiding hand which has conducted man onwards from the beginning, and taught him to anticipate better things in the future than he has enjoyed in the past, leading onward our race through all the grades of civilisation and society towards peace and happiness,—leading on the human mind through its trials and changes, hard struggles and sore afflictions, towards brighter enjoyments,—leading it still onward into preparation, which will make us anticipate another and a brighter state of existence, ampler powers, a wider sphere of influence, and larger enjoyments.

We worship God, who worketh all things according to

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the counsel of a will that is ever guided by benevolence, as its dictates are realised by omnipotence.

We rejoice in those bright and glorious views of the Creator which dawned upon the world in earlier ages, and which have held on their course,—checking the superstitions of men, correcting their depravity, enlightening their darkness,—which teach us to swell the song of thanksgiving, and bid us to look up to him, not merely as the supreme Governor of the world, not as an almighty Despot surrounded with terror, but as a Being ever gracious,—our Father,—who cares for us, guides us, trains us, and will bless us. Relying on that eternal love, may we look onward with confidence,—confidence in ourselves, confidence in human nature,—assured that hereafter will bring ampler stores of good for the inhabitants of this world; and that, when we undergo our great change, it will usher us into other and brighter regions. Amen.

This was followed by singing Hymns 65 and 66.

The Lecture.

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."—*Heb.* xi. 1.

Or, in more modern phraseology, the expression would run thus: "Faith is the realisation of the future, and the perception of the invisible." And this is what I endeavoured to show in the second of the lectures in the course on "the religious ideas," wherein it was argued that the growth of those ideas in the human mind was, in all the circumstances, an indication of their real, external existence; and the chief argument used for this purpose was, that the faculties of human nature are all objective. Whether we take them as mapped out physically by the phrenologist, or as they would be classed and arranged according to that philosophical authority which resolves all our faculties into the association of ideas,—in either way, what in popular phrase are called human faculties have relation to external objects. They imply the existence of those objects. This is the case even with the lowest of them. We live in space, and we have the organ of locality. It is the case even with the external senses,—an inferior species of faculty. The eye is formed for light,—

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and there is light for the enjoyment and for the use of the eye; the ear for the reception of sound,—and the vibrations of the atmosphere are, as it were, an aërial tide around us, continually flowing in. Now, if we have sight for seeing, and the ear for hearing,—if we have the different faculties which lead us to their exercise on natural objects, to pursue the conduct arising from our different relations with the human species, whether of affection or of antagonism,—it is certainly unreasonable to suppose that this rule should fail when we arrive at the higher faculties. If we have the organ of locality, and exist in space, we have the organ of veneration, and we exist to worship. In further pursuing this subject,—which, I take it, is tersely and beautifully expressed by the language which has just been read,—if we may describe the convictions within us, however we come by them, whether logically, or by what we may with more propriety call the moral instincts,—if we may describe those tendencies as the realisation of the future—as the perception of the invisible—as a "faith which is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen,"—it becomes an interesting inquiry, in what circumstances this may be safely relied upon. Evidently, it cannot be in all cases. And what I would especially endeavour to point out this morning is, the conditions under which we may assume from these moral instincts—from these faculties and tendencies in our constitution—the objective reality of that to which they point. When does that within us become the evidence of the real existence of that which is believed to be without us, but which is not the object of our sensuous perceptions?

These conditions, I think, are three: First, the reasonableness of the anticipation; secondly, its universality, or, if not its absolutely universal, its general, prevalence; and, thirdly, an accordance with what in other ways we ascertain of the principles and aims of the great providential plan of which we are a part. These three conditions, I apprehend, may induce us to give credence to the common tendencies of human nature as evidences of reality.

They must be reasonable. For many have professed doctrines at which it has been often said that "reason stands aghast, and faith herself is half confounded." Notions have been put forward as part and parcel of religion which

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revolt the rational faculties within us. The Hindoo tells me he believes in a god with a hundred arms. Well, if he only believes this as symbolical,—if it is only metaphor in marble,—one may receive this as indicative of the power of the divine being who is thus described. But if it be put to us—as by millions of Hindoos it would be—as an article of literal faith, then, I say, it is too unreasonable for us to take that faith as any indication whatever of reality. It could not be. The human form—and thus the Deity depictured in human form—is not framed and fashioned for that multitude of appendages. Take it all as figurative, and you have an easy emblem; take it as literal, and it is utterly inconceivable. This is a case in which we should not hesitate: we reject the faith as an indication of reality. When such a man even as Milton professes his belief in what had been considered a worn-out doctrine—the ascription of the human figure to Deity,—when he tells us that it was his faith that man was created literally and physically in the image of God,—I say again, our rational faculties are revolted. Is his Deity matter or spirit? Does he ascribe to God the need of sensuous perception? Is not such a being necessarily limited? Does not the very notion destroy that of omnipresence, which mankind with one consent have ascribed to the Divinity? We recoil from this too; we cannot conceive the Divine Spirit, that made and upholds and pervades the universe, to be thus circumscribed, and to bear a form which, whatever it be for a creature partly spiritual and partly material, seems to us altogether unfitted for that higher, that highest, state of existence in which we believe the Deity to live. Then, when the Trinitarian tells us that three are one, and that one is three,—that there are three infinite persons, and yet that they are but one infinite God,—three coeternal, and yet that one proceeds from the other two, and that the second is generated by the first,—when this is propounded, it will not do to shelter it under the veil of mystery; there is no mystery in the case. We can only say that it is stark, staring nonsense,—that it is unfitted for the reception of a rational being,—that it is not shrouded from us in darkness, but that it is brought into the light for us to perceive an incongruity to which it is not worth while to give further consideration, and which no texts,

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no alleged revelations, no speculations, no traditions, no miracles, are able rightly to substantiate to our minds. When another tells me that it is his firm faith that we shall rise again from the grave,—that these bodies—the very bodies that are put into the grave—shall at the last day come out of it,—when he tells me that he is to be, in his own faith and conception, the same being physically for eternal ages that he is here for threescore years and ten,—this, I say, does not commend itself to one's reason. Divines have drawn it out in detail. We have been told of Pompey's head in Italy flying through the air, at the sound of the trumpet, to meet his body on the shores of Egypt; and of Bruce's heart, dropped by the dying Douglas in Spain, on his way to Palestine, returning to nestle again in the bosom of the Scottish monarch in his native country. But all this is so monstrous to those who pay any attention to the workings of nature, that, whoever may believe it, the belief would certainly afford no proof of its reality. For what are the flesh, the bone, the brain, and the limbs of our bodies, after they have been put into the grave? They have become soil,—the soil has become plants, grass,—it has been eaten by animals, and transformed into their substance,—then again eaten by mankind. It has gone through changes, and become the property of others, and is altogether incapable of being reconstituted in that condition and order in which it once existed. Nature is thrifty in the use of her materials. They serve over and over again for the purposes of human life. There is not a stock of surplus matter in the world, so that each body, after death, can be kept apart and entire for such a physical resurrection: it has become the property of others,—it has had a thousand owners,—has passed, like the current coin of the realm, from one to another. Our bodies change while we live. It is said that every eight years there is a complete renovation of all the particles of the human frame. And in this England, or even this London of ours, we are a mixed race,—not only by descent from Romans, Danes, Saxons, Normans, and a hundred other tribes or nations, but also a mixed race in this,—that these atoms and particles of dust which constituted their bodies whilst they lived, and moved, and revelled, and fought upon the earth, exist now blended in us, and will exist in others afterwards.

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Nature employs the same material over and over again; and it is still subservient to the great purposes of individual life,—that individual life, which is not a mere combination of these coarse material particles which constitute the body, and which are mind, not me. There is something beyond this, — something firmer, more powerful, more enduring. In the continuous existence of that, we may believe; but in the entire revival of the human frame, it seems to me wonderful that any human being should believe.

In cases of this kind, the test of reasonableness being applied, we cannot take the faith as evidence of the reality, however firmly men may hold it. They may say they have read it in sacred books,—they may declare they have received it from the wisdom of their forefathers,—they may quote texts for it,—they may argue for it,—they may work, if they can, miracles for it,—and die at the stake in its belief; but all this cannot change the unreasonable into the reasonable. It cannot make the irrational worthy of the acceptance of a rational creature. We apply this test, then: we say, if the general faith of mankind is to be alleged as an indication of real, external, objective existence, it must be a reasonable faith; and the most common faith is the most reasonable. That sense of a Power above us,—that feeling of dependence,—that tendency to veneration,—that reliance on superior care,—that anticipation of continued being even beyond our great change,—these are the common dictates of human nature,—these are what the child, not crammed with the dogmas of schools and churches, readily apprehends. These are what men of different ages and countries have adhered to, even though incumbered with many superstitions. These are simple, rational, worthy of acceptation; and that they have been generally held by the human race,—that they assume to themselves the character of moral instincts,—may, I think, coupled with this rationality, be taken as a presumption of their being founded in truth.

This is one test. Another is the generality—we cannot say the absolute universality—of these religious ideas. They have none of those boundaries which mark out upon the map the limits of all specific religions. We cannot take a globe, and colour it, and say, Beyond that line

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there is not the apprehension of an Infinite Spirit, of a providential authority and power, or of a future state of existence. You cannot find any country which would be beyond the boundary-line. Or, if you make your marks chronologically as well as geographically, you cannot find any age destitute of those conceptions. No doubt there are exceptions—individual exceptions. For a brief while, now and then, there is a national exception: when a country is either in the most stupid ignorance and barbarism,—as for a time the Jews seem to have been; or when it reaches the utmost dissoluteness of manners,—as the Romans seem to have done about the time of the commencement of the empire. But, with these transitory exceptions, what I have described is the common faith of mankind,—that which has been held in all countries, in all ages, and by all classes of mind and character. Now, nothing of this sort can be said of such doctrines as I have just been adverting to, or of any specific forms of religion. Sometimes the test of Christian doctrine has been set up,—that it is that which has been held by the Christian church always, every where, and by all. This has been a favourite test, with some, of what constitutes Christian doctrine; and what is the effect of it? Why, it cuts away creeds and catechisms and articles by wholesale. It pares down Christianity to what the great majority would immediately call mere naturalism,—they would not allow the name of Christianity to it. And yet these simple truths are most confined as an indication of the Christian system; the test has been applied only by a minority of Christians; and Christians themselves are only a minority of the human kind. Mahometans outnumber them; and, probably, the pagan world would still outnumber both. The great majority of the human race know the name of neither Christ, nor Jehovah, nor Allah, nor Mahomet. But where is there a land, where a race, or a tribe, that has not its notions of an invisible and an active Power? Where are there men without the anticipation of futurity? What do the exceptions amount to? The term atheism has always been held in abhorrence, from its designating that to which the great majority of the world was vehemently opposed. The atheist himself sometimes calls on God in a storm; and the man who denies any immortality for

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the human being will yet devote laborious days and nights to the pursuit of fame,—of a fame which is to resound its strains over his unconscious corpse. Universality, in the general conception of the word, is only to be claimed for the simplest and purest religious ideas.

Now, I think this common consent is indicative of reality, because it raises these ideas into what I have described them,—the class of human instincts, tendencies of our constitution, which it is evident the Maker of that constitution designed we should entertain. They may be discriminated from the reveries of mere imagination,—from individual fancies; and there is a beautiful instance of this discrimination in a very familiar passage,—one which has been often quoted,—but to which I will refer because of the philosophy at the end of it, which has been much less regarded than the description which constitutes its chief attraction. I allude to the dialogue in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, where, after the strange preternaturalisms of the night, which constitute the drama, Hippolyta says:

"'Tis strange, my Theseus, what these lovers speak of.
Theseus. More strange than true. I never may believe
These antique fables, nor these fairy toys.
Lovers and madmen have such seething brains,
Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend
More than cool reason ever comprehends.
The lunatic, the lover, and the poet,
Are of imagination all compact:
One sees more devils than vast hell can hold,—
That is the madman; the lover, all as frantic,
Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt;
The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven,—
And, as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.
Such tricks hath strong imagination,
That, if it would but apprehend some joy,
It comprehends some bringer of that joy;
Or, in the night, imagining some fear,
How easy is a bush supposed a bear!"

And in this case, these remarks, this philosophy of the power of the imagination, seem rightly applied. It is applied to things which do not, in the every-day world

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in which we live, become objective realities: they are the convictions of the lunatic, the lover, and the poet,—of the morbid and diseased mind, of excited passion, and of uncontrolled imagination. They are resolvable into these causes; and there is an end of any argument from them to reality. And yet, in the construction of the poem I am quoting from, they are realities,—they are to be taken for granted while you are reading that poem, or seeing it represented. And why? The reason is given us in the reply of Hippolyta:

> "But all the story of the night told over,
> And all their minds transfigur'd so together,
> More witnesseth than fancy's images,
> And grows to some thing of great constancy;
> But, howsoever, strange and admirable."

That is to say, the coincidence of that smaller number of minds raises these imaginings into a higher degree of credibility. It raised them, according to the construction of the poem, into the very highest; for there they stand as realities. They are not realities apart from that conventionalism by which the scenic representation is accompanied; and thus, perhaps, the poet meant to intimate that there was an unreality about the whole world which was thus exhibited; and then the remarks on the power of imagination regain their force when we apply them to the actual world.

This discrimination, on the same principles, I think we may make as to the objects of human faith, even when faith is so strong as to seem to become actual perception. We do not admit external reality because the devout Catholic fisherman, sea-tossed on the wave, and in danger of storm and wreck, prays to the Virgin, and perhaps beholds her face smiling benignantly in the clouds, and finds his way safe to harbour. We call in here the action of unchecked imagination. With that sort of faith, and on this principle, the dying Stephen—while his executioners are surrounding him with fierce imprecations, and stoning him to death in the barbarous mode of execution adopted by the Jews—sees Christ in whom he believed in glory; the clouds open to give him the vision; he beholds him at the right hand of God, and hears his words of encouragement. In this sort of faith, the Egyptian Sethos beholds Isis,

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hears her oracles, and imbibes their wise import. In this faith miracles are witnessed, even in the present day, by those who previously believe them. The supernatural forms which people of any country or any race behold, are the forms of the supernatural beings which belong to the traditions of that race and country. The oriental sees his genii and colossal spirits. The inhabitants of the north behold fetches and the water-spirits, and hear their ominous shrieking. In all this we can trace the power and influence of the imagination; we can see where the separation takes place between such notions and those which belong to human nature in all its varied phases. The latter are the ideas I have described as the elements of religion. They may be intermingled with other suggestions; they may be incorporated with, and overlaid by, other convictions for a time; but still they have this attribute of universality, or of comparative prevalence, so as to make it strange that different minds should be so transformed.

A third condition which I specified was, the harmonising with what we know of the providential plan. Of that, indeed, but little is our knowledge. We are but as the fly on the wheel, speculating on the movements of the machine. Very small is the portion that can be obvious to our inspection, or even to that of the whole human race, when accumulated from generation to generation by means of tradition or of literature. It is only of late that we have known much of the physical condition of the globe and its accompanying planets. The solar system for ages was thoroughly misunderstood. Even now, the great majority of the world probably have no conception of its rotundity, but believe it to be a vast extended plain, and that the heavenly bodies move above it. The long ages of the world's existence, the gradual formation of the present shapes of unconscious matter, and the gradual uprising of living beings,—these are comparatively recent discoveries. We may still say, as was said in an early age respecting the Almighty,—"We cannot find him out." But this one thing we know, that nature and humanity live under a law of progress. We know that the mighty work of creation —not the miracle or magic of a moment—held on through ages which we have not numbers to express, and that still it was making advances from unconscious being to the

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organisation of the simplest plants,—from them to the higher vegetable productions,—from rude forms of life and motion to others more complicate, until at last it reached man; and that this was only the beginning of a new progressive development; that then man in society enlarged his powers and his attainments, and showed, in his mode of existence through successive generations, that he was still in the course of progress. This, then,—this law of progress, at least,—we do know. And the religious ideas harmonise with it. They set before us that infinity towards which we advance; they give us the anticipation of that eternity through which we may make our advance. They accord with it; for unless there be a future life, where is the progress of human nature,—in the great majority of instances cut off whilst many of its faculties seem only to be beginning to develop themselves,—in all, breaking off as an imperfect work,—in all, pointing onwards to something that is to minister to the completion and the fulfilment of the plan? In this respect, then, the religious ideas harmonise with what little we do know of the providential plan. The problem, indeed, in this case seems to be this: Suppose a Creator making a world material, visible, tangible, yet where intellect should not be absent. Suppose him forming another system, of which, as a whole, the first should be a part, invisible, intangible, spiritual, enduring. How is the one of these systems to be brought to bear upon the other? How is that which is invisible, intangible, spiritual, and enduring, to exercise an influence on the system which is visible, tangible, and material, so as to give to it greater dignity, purity, elevation, and higher aims and purposes? Now, this, I apprehend, is solved by the supposition that, living in the material system, which yet is subservient to and one with the spiritual and the unseen system, we have that intuitive apprehension, we have that instinctive conviction, of there being such a system, which makes it a reality to us,—gives it power over us,—raises us from being the mere creatures of time and sense,—makes us look onward to interminable being,—and gives to our present existence the lofty impress of connection with that being. At any rate, the hypothesis will suit the facts; and in this way it is possible for us at once to belong to this material world, to feel its interests, to pursue its purposes, but yet to have such glimpses within

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ourselves of what is higher, better, and more lasting, as to distinguish us broadly from the beasts, that have no such anticipations.

This I imagine to be the moral purpose which the religious ideas achieve by their growth in the common human mind. And how else could such a union of the material with the spiritual system, of the visible with the invisible, be accomplished? By magic? by revelations? by oracles? by the visits of ghosts, the spirits of the dead? To all these modes have men had recourse, to all these theories, —in their earnestness to know something of that which is unseen, and something of that which is to be. They have tried their magic, black and white,—endeavouring to command the darker spirits, and to call down pure spirits, to answer their inquiries,—to raise even the dead from their graves, to give them some information of the unseen world. And all this is but the limited power of imagination, a confined tendency, which cannot stand the application of the texts that have been propounded. So with revelation and oracles. What are they? What have they ever told? The being of a God was not revealed to the Jews; it was anticipated; it was assumed, taken for granted, in the very first verse of the first book of their Bible. A future life for man was not revealed to the Jews; they learned the doctrine in their captivity in Babylon. What do we find recorded? Oracles telling them where to pitch their tents, —when to fight against the Philistines,—how to return to their own country,—and such matters; showing that the inevitable result of such a mode of connecting together the unseen with the seen would be to materialise both, to lower both, and that it would fail in creating that influence which the one should exercise over the other. Very common indeed has been the belief in ghosts; and no wonder. For how many occasions there are in a life when some few moments with those who have departed would gratify the most earnest longings of the heart! and, supposing their identity and their memory, might we not imagine that they would have their longings too? And yet, what do all such tales amount to,—the best authenticated of them? They do nothing towards raising character. They discover title-deeds that were concealed in some unsuspected place; or, at the most, they tell of robbery and murder. It is not in this

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way that the invisible acts upon the visible, so as to raise and consecrate and really dignify it. It is by mental conviction, and that fed by what we may almost call the sense of the future and of the unseen which is natural to man in all his diversities of country and of age. No doubt, individual faith may be as firm when it is unreasonable,—may approach in firmness to the common human faith when it is most rational. And, in a certain sense, each one's faith—not a mere conventionalism, not a verbal faith, but each one's sincere faith—is a reality to himself, and has the effect of reality. There are those who believe in an ever-flaming and yawning hell,—in its rolling billows of sulphur,—in torments, mental and physical, protracting themselves to countless ages,—in a state of anguish and despair, where one wretch cries, "What is the hour?" and another wretch answers, "Eternity." There has been a firm faith, making it a reality to the individual, in that grotesque and sensuous paradise which the Mahometan warrior anticipates; which is his reward for his valour in battle against the infidels,—where smiling houris will greet his entrance, and the colossal golden tree bend down its rich fruits for his taste, and the fountains will ever sparkle. That is to him a reality which carries him through blood and wounds and death. There is a reality to the Hindoo in his conviction that by fasting, repeated prayers, bodily mortification, sitting moveless for years, by fixing his eyes and thoughts,—he shall gain such an abstraction for the soul as will facilitate its being reunited with that Eternal Mind of which it is an emanation. There is a reality to others in the faith that when they die they shall, as they phrase it, go to glory,—that they shall see the Deity sitting upon a throne, and surrounded with a rainbow,—that they shall behold the Saviour, with the marks of the cross yet in his feet and hands and side,—that they shall join a great multitude of winged beings, striking golden harps,—that they shall wear white robes, and carry palm-branches, and sing eternal psalms. All these have been held as a faith so lively that to the individual they have been realities. Well, I would not undertake to say that they were the worse for such a faith; as compared with holding no notions of things unseen and eternal. But these are still partial, imperfect, unreasonable, erroneous convictions,—harmonis-

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ing with nothing that we can discern of the plans of Providence, pointing us to no realities that we can recognise. We find a purer and higher influence in his faith who feels that for himself, and for the world, and for all worlds, and for all "this mighty scene of things," there is a creating and pervading Spirit, which is and lives and breathes in all. He walks with God; he feels himself encompassed by a guiding power which cannot err,—a protecting power which cannot be overmastered. He holds on his course, looking on to that state in which, to borrow a sublime phrase of the apostle Peter, he will be "filled unto all the fulness of God." And that conviction, answering the great purpose of raising the seen towards the unseen,—of purifying the transitory by bringing it into contact with the enduring,—it is a faith which indicates its own reality; it is the substance of things hoped for in its tangible bearings upon mind, heart, and character.

And a weary world it would be without it. Were we to be utterly regardless of the future, of the unseen, what would life amount to? Answering, with much expenditure and thought, the questions—"What shall we eat?" "What shall we drink?" and "Wherewithal shall we be clothed?"—pursuing our perhaps causeless loves or causeless hatreds with an energy that might be devoted to better things;—cherishing and endeavouring to achieve the dreams of our ambition;—endeavouring to make this brief life pass pleasantly, and bearing our griefs and sorrows as we may: this is surely not all for man,—not all for which these powers were given, for which these faculties and instincts were bestowed. They must have some higher, some better, some nobler object than all this—or we might almost wish to exchange with the beasts; for our life would be reduced nearer to the level of theirs, and it would have this misery which they cannot feel,—that we know our capacity for something infinitely better and more blissful. But we are not left thus. Systems may not satisfy us; sacred books may be open to criticism; ancient traditions may be demolished; teachers may rise and may pass away, making only a small contribution to the stock of human wisdom, instead of being its holders and its generous dispensers for coming ages. We may not have a logical array of proofs for the thoughts and hopes that we entertain and cherish. But still we are

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not left thus. We are never left to the mere influence of the visible, the tangible, the transitory. The instincts which are irrepressible, which belong to our nature and our constitution every where and always,—these are with us: and however religions may change, and systems rise and disappear, these tell us of thoughts which are coexistent with humanity,—which have lived through all its history,—which never fade away, because there is a provision for their constant renewal in the constitution of our being and in the voice of nature, inviting to adore and love our Father and our God.

The service was concluded by singing Hymn 117.

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LECTURE VII.

Scripture Expression of the Religious Ideas (*continued*)

December 14th, 1851.

The service was commenced by singing Hymns 74 and 75.

The Prayer.

May the homage which we render to the Eternal Spirit be rendered in spirit and in truth! We worship God, and would express our filial reliance on the Father of our spirits. Although encompassed by objects of worldly pursuit, may we not be absorbed by them, and succumb wholly to the present cares, anxieties, and exertions! Gladly may we withdraw our minds from such concerns, and by meditation on that Power which is every where diffused, and every where blessing, may we seek strength, and hope, and purity, and love, to go through our present condition, improving its advantages, and reaping its enjoyments! May his presence be ever with us, spread over our minds, purifying all things, consecrating every good work we undertake, enabling us to see the invisible, and to realise the future, blending the visible and invisible, the temporal concerns of this brief state with those of eternal duration! May we render them worthy of the life which is within us, and of the powers which, we trust, are destined to survive to all eternity! May we walk on the earth as the children of the God of heaven and of earth, and may our pure and simple homage influence the mind and confirm the character, raising it in its moral elevation, combining nations together in itself, yielding to the advance of knowledge, and wisdom, and goodness, and happiness! May such advantages extend themselves more and more, till they unite the whole human family in the acknowledgment of our Father and God, worshiping, not merely at stated times and in particular assemblages, and with certain external forms and expressions, but by the

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prevailing condition of the heart, the influences and character of the life—that whole which makes us worthy of the high vocation to which we are called. Thus may we be strengthened in our hopes for the ultimate and universal happiness and enjoyment of mankind. Amen.

This was followed by singing Hymns 72 and 81.

The Lecture.

"There is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding."—*Job* xxxii. 8.

"All scripture" (literally, "every writing") "is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."—2 *Timothy* iii. 16.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, See, I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: and I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of timber, to work in all manner of workmanship. And I, behold, I have given with him Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan: and in the hearts of all that are wise-hearted I have put wisdom, that they may make all that I have commanded thee; the tabernacle of the congregation, and the ark of the testimony, and the mercy-seat that is thereupon, and all the furniture of the tabernacle, and the table and his furniture, and the pure candlestick with all his furniture, and the altar of incense, and the altar of burnt offering with all his furniture, and the laver and his foot, and the cloths of service, and the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons, to minister in the priest's office, and the anointing oil, and sweet incense for the holy place: according to all that I have commanded thee shall they do."—*Exodus* xxxi. 1-11.

My object in reading these passages is to show, that in the language of the Old, and even of the New, Testament, the scriptural idea of inspiration, or of revelation, is not confined to that theological meaning to which it is mainly restricted in the present day, but that it applies generally

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to the operations of the human mind, to that state in which not only great or high truths are unfolded, but to that state also in which the ordinary workings of the intellect bring scientific and other truths into a systematised form, and to that even in which the operations, and some of the common operations, of artistry are executed. In all these, according to the Bible, there is Divine inspiration. At the commencement of those lectures, I stated the purpose which I should endeavour to pursue throughout, which is, to place before you, from scripture, declarations substantially coinciding with the notions advanced in the lectures on the religious ideas. I explained that I did not adduce them as proofs,—I did not rely upon them as arguments,—but I took them as evidences of this fact: that, as might be expected, the instinctive tendencies, religious and moral, of the human mind show themselves in the compositions of varied ages and of varied characters. We find them in religions the most expansive and in religions the most exclusive. We find them in monotheism the most pure; we find them in idolatry the most multiplex, and apparently the most degraded. We trace them in the writings of ancient nations; we find them in the productions of moderns, holding very different systems of theology; and, as might be expected, we find them scattered through scripture, and, though intermixed with much else, being found there in clear and explicit terms. This, though not proving the sentiments themselves, proves the fact that those sentiments have been generally entertained, are native to the human race, spring up spontaneously, as it were, from the human mind, amid modifications from outward circumstances as to the specific forms of religion entertained by any people.

In pursuing this course, I have already disposed of several of the topics of those lectures. In them the universality of the religious ideas is asserted; the apostle declaring, that it is "the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." Universality is the characteristic of the Divine. In them it was asserted that these moral tendencies, like the faculties of the human constitution, are objective,—that they relate to something without us, and are indicative of objective reality; and this has been described in the words, that "Faith is the substance of things

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hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Deity is depicted in them as the Creator and as the omnipresent Ruler of the world; and we have shown this assertion in passages which declare that "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," and that we can nowhere flee from his spirit, or escape from his presence. Our moral instincts were described in those lectures as belonging to our nature, —as a law written upon the heart,—as existing within us, rather than impressed upon us by external agency; and we have heard Moses declaring, that the law is not in heaven, that any should fetch it thence, nor beyond the sea, that any should cross the ocean to bring it, but that it is very nigh to us, even in our heart, and in our mouth. And this course we might pursue with every single and separate topic of those lectures. We might take inspiration, or revelation, as described in the various texts to which I shall presently return; or the Divine attributes, as they are explained in the reply of Christ, according to one reading of the Gospel of Matthew,—"Why talkest thou to me of good? There is none good but one; that is God"—or, as sublimely described in the first Epistle of John,—"God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." The views there entertained of redemption might be exemplified in Moses,—when the Deity is described as angry with the children of Israel, and threatening to blot them out of his book,—praying that he himself might rather be blotted out, and that his nation might continue to enjoy the Divine favour. We might exemplify the view there put forth of human immortality in the argumentative metaphor of the apostle Paul, as to the difference between the seed deposited in the ground and the plant into which it sprang up. The views of futurity might also be exemplified in his words, of "one star differing from another star in glory;" or in the words to which I alluded in my last lecture, of the apostle Peter, that we "shall be filled unto all the fulness of God." And the general spirit and substance of those lectures may be fairly condensed and comprised in the words of the Epistle to the Hebrews: "He that cometh unto God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of those that diligently seek him." I shall not therefore pursue any further than this morning this plan of exemplifying particular opinions; and the next

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and the closing lecture of this series—if indeed they may be called a series—will relate to certain general expressions contained in the Hebrew and the Christian scriptures, which are in manifest coincidence of spirit with that theory which resolves all theology into the elements of the religious ideas.

And now, to revert again to those passages which have been read: that in Job, describing human intelligence; that in Paul, describing Jewish literature; that from the book of Exodus, describing Jewish artistry;—all of these are identified with inspiration. What is meant by inspiration is nothing peculiarly theological. It is that which, beaming in upon the mind of the philosopher, shows him some great, general, systematic classification of the works of nature. It is that which guides the pen of the writer, and enables him to give utterance to truths which impress the mind of man, and affect his character. It is that which, acting upon the thoughts and feelings, raises them to higher objects and to grander operations. It is that which builds the temple, which piles the pyramid, which produces the song or poem; that which performs its fine and exquisite work of artistry, as well as that also which speaks of the God from whom we derive existence, and whose gifts are all our powers and faculties. This latter was peculiar to the Jews; this was their strong point. They had their writers, but their literature is not the most varied; they had their artists, but their artistry was not of the finest or highest description. It was their sublime monotheism which marked out their character, which constitutes the grandeur both of the people to whom we owe the Bible and of the Bible itself, and which was peculiarly their mission upon earth, to which they were witnesses when elsewhere it was generally forgotten. They had their temple, of which they were proud; but there were other temples, much more harmonious, much more grand, in Greece; there were temples much more stupendous in Egypt. They had their attempts at philosophising; but the men who saw the deepest into the works of nature, into the connection of cause and effect, and into the tendencies of things, were not of the seed of Abraham, but are to be sought in that great intellectual race, the Greek writers, whose works are still, in our colleges and universities, the teachers of human kind. They were excelled in every kind

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of inspiration—as inspiration is described in these passages —by Egyptians, by Greeks, by Romans, by Hindoos, in ancient nations; and still more strongly, by modern nations. But their delineations of Deity, and their worship of Deity, remain still peculiar and unrivalled. To the passages which have been adduced in this and other lectures, no parallel whatever is to be found. In this they took the start of the majestic world; and whatever poets or divines, historians or philosophers, might do in other regions, it was to Isaiah that the word of the Lord came, so that he called on the earth to hear it; and it was in Christ that that word became incarnate and tabernacled amongst men.

But still, inspiration is equally attributed to all; and that inspiration in no one of its parts wears that character of infallibility which the divines of our days commonly ascribe to it. All eminent men, and men producing works of any kind which were to act on the human race, were, in their view of the subject, inspired. But did that inspiration produce perfection? The builders of their temple were inspired,—inspired, we find, not only as to the main and outer works and general design, but inspired as to its minute ornaments; and they reckoned their temple a wonder of the world; and yet, what was it? In what did its design realise perfection? Egypt formed a school of architecture; Greece gave birth to one which endures to the present day, and men copy its columns and its cornices; and, without regard to differences of climate and of purpose, which often render inconvenient what in the first instance was useful, they still reproduce again and again those lovely and admirable forms which, through long ages, have been gazed upon with delight. But what remains to us of Jewish architecture, or Jewish art in connection with it? Just the figure of a candlestick, with its seven branches, in the commemorative sculpture of the victories of Titus! Nothing more. Their philosophers were inspired. No doubt we have in them many very fine descriptions,—as that of the horse, whose neck is clothed with thunder, in the book of Job, and of the behemoth. We have many beautiful allusions in their poets. We are told that Solomon "spake of all trees, from the cedar-tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall;" yet, what did they towards the arrangement or comprehension

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of the works of nature? How much have they left for subsequent discoverers! There was no Jewish Linnæus or Cuvier. Not a step in advance was made towards those sciences which, having sprung up in modern times, have so rapidly advanced towards their completeness and maturity. They philosophised on man,—first regarding him as a mere material being, resolved into his elements in the grave,—then as a triplex being, formed of body, soul, and spirit; neither of which theories has gained the sanction of the most accurate philosophers, or stood the investigation of the thoughts of ages. In all these things they showed themselves inferior to others; they were outdone, they were eclipsed; and yet in all these there was inspiration. And when we look at their literature, what do we find? The most perfect of all stories, of an inferior kind. That lovely little pastoral of the book of Ruth is a perfect gem in its way. But we find in their literature a cosmogony which will not stand the test of modern discovery, and which, at that early period, had been scouted in more enlightened regions. We find a chronology which the utmost research of ingenuity cannot verify, or bring into any degree of consistency. We find histories that have been evidently tampered with by priests, and, if not invented, yet adorned and interpolated, to answer purposes. We find a specimen of amatory poetry in the Song of Solomon, but one by no means adapted to western ideas, however it might sound in oriental ears. If we go to the Apocrypha, there is a specimen of fiction in the tale of Tobit and his dog. There are some sublime moral ideas in the Prophets; and some lively and impressive devotional compositions in the Psalms; but no great epic poem, no grand dramatic production,—nothing to compare with those gigantic and unrivalled compositions which have raised the mind, the feeling, the taste, of the world through long successive generations. In all these their inspiration was imperfect. It did much; it could not accomplish all; and it did not impart any thing approaching to perfection or infallibility. Did it achieve that in their theology? However grand, however unparalleled, as I have just called them, some of their compositions may be, even in the finest of them we do not always escape the perception of a flaw. Grandly adoring the omnipresence of the Deity, the writer of the

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Psalm on which I was recently lecturing yet indulges in a strain of vindictiveness and animosity towards those who differed from him which is altogether unworthy the loftier strains of his subject. Again, we find the Deity, however magnificent the description of his perfections, adverted to as a jealous God,—one whose feelings are wounded and whose ire is excited by homage offered to other deities, though it may be only addressed to the same Divinity under another name. We find the Father of the universe narrowed into Jehovah, the tutelar god and guardian of the Jews, their local deity, establishing his residence amongst them, and making war on other kingdoms, and threatening destruction to idols and the worshipers of idols. We find massacre ascribed to the Divine command itself, and massacre of the most sanguinary and atrocious kind, extending to man, woman, and child,—to the unarmed and the helpless,—nay, even to the very beasts of the field. We find a hard and external morality inculcated amongst them, and often the elevation even of mere ceremonies to a superiority over moral worth. We find fierceness and warring in the name of God amongst the virtues of the Old Testament; we find some indistinct traces of asceticism and of superstition in the New Testament. We find there faith required as a condition of salvation; and the Divine Spirit, the Holy Ghost, allowed by Deity to be given by man to man,—transferred from one frail, fallible being to another frail, fallible being. There is, then, a large deduction to be made in this case as well as in the other. There is inspiration; there is not infallibility.

And this association of ideas,—this erroneous connection of things which are not indissolubly united,—this ascription of infallibility to inspiration,—has been productive of two great evils in the world. Impressing men with a conviction that every sentence in the Old and New Testaments was inspired, and that inspiration guided to infallibility, of course every word became of the greatest importance; every letter, every dot or iota, was supposed to have its meaning, and that meaning to be discoverable by human ingenuity. And thus divines and believers and earnest students of religious truth have been degraded into mere word-mongers. They have been discussing translations and constructions, they have been looking to the rules

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of grammar and syntax, they have been weighing words and syllables, when their minds ought to have been employed on great and broad principles, seeking after truth, and not after the meaning of obscure passages dependent upon such considerations. Perhaps there has been seldom a more baneful influence upon the human mind than that which was exercised, especially upon the great intellects of the middle ages, by these verbal discussions,—all arising out of the notion that every chapter, verse, sentence, and word being of Divine inspiration, and consequently infallible, was to be thus analysed, and the truth discovered by this petty, this narrowing process, this degrading exercise of the thoughts of our rational and intellectual being. The time, the powers, the faculties, that should have been labouring to ascend the mountain of truth have been employed in these minute discussions, these microscopic observations, until, with all their energy and vastness, they have partaken of the littleness of the drudgery which they were condemned, by this most preposterous notion, to go through.

Nor is this the only evil. This connection of infallibility with inspiration has also led to a servility of mind which is by no means favourable to human character, which destroys the independence of intellect. Protestants are apt to say that the Roman Catholic system is degrading, because it humbles understanding and conscience at the feet of the priest; it makes the priest the lord of faith, of conscience, and of thought; and this is described —and it is not improperly described—as a servitude degrading to human intelligence, one which it cannot endure without being debased thereby. Well, but suppose the servitude to be directed, not to a man, but to a book, is it much the better for that? Is it much more favourable to independence of thought, to freedom of discussion, to the growth, strength, and expansion of the intellectual faculties? The slavery is as great in the one case as in the other; and the believer in the infallibility of all the sentences which he finds between the two covers of the Bible is as much deprived of the power of original, free, and independent thought on religious and moral subjects, as is the veriest slave of the most assuming priest that ever humbled the penitent in the confessional. He is a slave,

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too,—the slave of a book which cannot hear,—of a book which cannot speak,—of a book which has not that vital power which resides in any human being by whom thought and speech are exercised. In being the slave of a book, he is the slave of a man also, and not of a living man, but of a dead one; the slave, not of a priest that walks the earth, and has something to show for the regal authority which he assumes over the thoughts of others,—but he is the slave of some Jew that died three or four thousand years ago, who left certain words on record, which words have been translated and expounded; and through which, with all these modifications, the dead Jew lords it over the living Christian. This is not the condition to which true religion, real morality, or sound philosophy tend to elevate the human mind. They are fallacies which show a flaw in the system in which they originated; they show that there must be a fallacy somewhere in this theory of any connection between inspiration and infallibility.

It is the tendency of the passages I have read to identify inspiration in all its phases; and this, I apprehend, is a great and interesting truth. According to *The Religious Ideas,* and according to the scripture, in that concurrence with them which I have pointed out in several passages read as texts, inspiration is one and the same thing in the prophet and the apostle, the poet and the philosopher, the architect or the artist,—it is one and the same thing in all. In all it is not infallibility, but in all it is a raised condition of the mind,—an excited state, it may be,—a state in which thoughts impress themselves with greater power than in other conditions and in other circumstances. It is a state not induced by the long chain of logical investigation, but which manifests itself in those fleeting moments that come to many, and that may perhaps come to all, when we see things in a clearer light than at other times, and behold their forms and colouring with more vivid emotion. It is the state in which the architect conceives the outline, to be carried into detail afterwards by laborious thought,—the outline of the great cathedral which he will raise, with its massive buttresses, its long resounding aisles, with its towers, spire, and all the magnificence of its mightiness and of its adornments. It is the state of mind in which the philosopher,—as is told in the

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well-known story of Sir Isaac Newton,—from some external circumstance, perhaps, receives an impulse which unfolds to him the arrangement of the universe, the laws that bind the planets rolling in their spheres, and fix the sun in the centre,—which withdraws, as it were, the veil or curtain that made creation a mystery before to the most observant student and to the most accomplished philosopher. It is the state of mind in which the poet has his visions flitting most palpably before him, and in which he expresses "thoughts that breathe" in "words that burn." It is the condition in which the martyr, the devoted child of self-sacrifice, goes onward to endurance, feeling it indeed through every vein and fibre, but still adhering to, and resolving, like those heroic spirits of old, to suffer for, the well-being of others, and for the promotion of good in the world, and to do so on no selfish principle, and with no coveting of crowns of glory, of palm-branches, of future and enduring recompense. It is the state of mind in which the theologian sees the glory and goodness of God pass before him, and describes them in strains like those of the prophet-bards of the Hebrew people of old; and like those also which, even in modern times, have given all the power of truth and beauty and force to such compositions as those of Jeremy Taylor, of Fenelon, and others, and made them the means, in the elevation of their own minds, of raising the souls of others towards the Divinity. It is this state of mind which the Jewish historian Josephus ascribes to an orator, whose words, he says, acted on the multitude so as—by rousing them, we may infer, into clearer conceptions and a more vivid zeal for the true, the right, and the just—to make them "possessed with a demon;" that is, he put them, as well as himself, into that state which the Jews designated inspiration.

And this is confined to no place, to no time, to no people. It is felt universally, felt by the heathen nation as well as by the Christian, felt by the idolater as well as by the monotheist. It is modern, it is pagan, it is universal, it is human, as well as it is ancient, Jewish, and theological. It is one of those gifts which Providence bestows liberally and upbraids not. There is revelation, no doubt. Revelation is inspiration confirmed. The truth uttered in this state by the poet or the philosopher, or indicated in his

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works by the artist, is confirmed by experience; it becomes largely demonstrable; approves itself to the faculties of mankind; takes its place amongst the undoubted, the elementary, the enduring. Then is inspiration passed into revelation; the momentary impulse has become an enduring reality.

If this be true, religion is in harmony with all human faculties; it is in harmony with the general character of man. It is promoted by, and, to a certain extent, consists in, that general character. The sectarians err, and grossly err, who would proscribe philosophy, who would warn men against it, who would subdue all its dictates into a conformity with the words of texts. Philosophy has its portion to bear in the general influences which result in religion in the human soul, as well as the most direct theological declarations. If this be true, those sectarians err who would proscribe poetry, unless it be the doggerel of their hymns; who would banish artistry; who hold theatres in abomination; who would have prevented the young painter from the exercise of his powers, till they were too strong for such interference; who look upon a work of fiction with jealousy, not knowing that fiction is often the vehicle, and one of the best vehicles, of exalted moral truth; and who say, when logic incommodes them, "Argument, argument! —the Lord rebuke thee, argument!" It shows the error of those who think that there can be no religious education but by dinning the words of creeds and catechisms into children's ears, and who make them repeat words instead of expanding their faculties. The people who cry out against secular education as dangerous to the mind unless accompanied by religion, should look at the effects of schools, whether in this country or in Ireland, and they would see that wherever general instruction is carried to the furthest and highest point,—that wherever the children become most informed, and have their minds exercised upon things belonging to the common, every-day affairs of human life,—those children are found to bear a better examination into what notions they entertain of religion than those from whom this book of knowledge has been shut up, a closed page, and who have only had their minds intently riveted upon what was supposed immediately to concern their spiritual good. There is food for religion

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and for the growth of human character in all thoughts, in all principles, in all pursuits, in all departments of human knowledge. Amongst other beautiful metaphors of the Hebrew scriptures, God is described as a shepherd: "The Lord is my shepherd," says David. And He does not lead his flock merely to the barren moors of verbal theology; he does not impound them within the dreary circle of Jewish forms, or even of Christian ceremonies. He feeds them with the world's riches; he conducts them where varied stores of all kinds, accumulated by the wisdom and the intelligence of ages, are spread before them for their enjoyment; he leads them to the pastures, ever fresh and green, of the best works of human imagination or of human reason; he leads them where the stream of poetry is flowing murmuring on for ever, where the fruits of knowledge bend to the touch and to the taste. And thus, though they may still be encompassed with cares, may be alarmed by dangers, and oppressed by troubles,—thus, they have a foretaste of that better state into which he is conducting them, where they shall have a much wider and more ample range,—higher enjoyments; and in peace and safety, in happiness and hope, anticipate the everlasting expansion of their powers, and run that course which shall have no ending, and be ever more bright and gladdening through the ages of eternity.

The service was concluded by singing Hymn 107.

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LECTURE VIII.

Scripture Expression of the Religious Ideas (*continued*).

December 21st, 1851.

The service was commenced by singing Hymn 76.

The Prayer.

We bless the God of the revolving seasons, whose word moves them on in their harmonious courses, with their variety producing the uniformity of the year, and causing heat and cold, summer and winter, seed-time and harvest, not to cease upon the face of the earth; thus not only rendering it the fit abode for humanity, and providing for the subsistence of man and beast, but adding also beauty, diversity, and stimulus, to call forth the exercise of the senses and the faculties of our nature, making them inlets of thought and feeling, enabling us to see the presence of the Deity in his works, and from them storing our minds with that which furnishes nutriment to the higher powers of our being, and raises us from physical to spiritual existence.

We bless the God, not only of these revolving seasons which diversify the year, causing the changes which spread themselves over the face of the earth, and making them all to minister to animated life, but who presides over the changes of human destiny,—giving us our springtide of hope, our summer of enjoyment,—but who also allots to us our dreary winter of sorrow and endurance; and, as in the physical world these changing phenomena all minister to one great purpose, as they still fulfil the wise and benignant designs of Providence, so may the changes of our earthly destiny form and fashion us for higher spheres of exertion and nobler kinds of enjoyment; and may we hear the monitions to works of kindness and charity towards others which the seasons present; may the afflicted, the poor,

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and the destitute not appeal to us in vain. May we be ministers of God's good to man, and at the same time acknowledge ourselves its recipients.

May we find also indications even in the events of our own time of that same everlasting power which out of darkness educes light, causes good to spring out of evil, and makes evil to exist for the sake of more abundant good than would otherwise be realised.

May we look at the changing fortunes of the human race, the varying destiny of nations, with trust that however they may be overspread with darkness, and whole peoples be plunged into slavery and crouch to passion, still that the influences which have hitherto carried on the progress of civilisation have not lost their power, have not relaxed their energy, and will secure for them and for the whole human race the realisation of the great law of progress; and, as man is still the child of God, may he approach nearer and nearer to his heavenly Father, live in peace and brotherhood with all mankind: and thus may we all eventually join in that ascription to him and expression of love to one another which is attributed to the song of angels,—Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good will amongst men. Amen.

This was followed by singing Hymns 106 and 133.

The Lecture.

Hitherto, in these lectures, I have taken brief expressions of particular views from scripture, coinciding with those expressed on the several topics that occupied the lectures on the religious ideas. I think enough has been done in this way to show that there is nothing in the theory implied in the religious ideas that is antagonistic to the best teachings of the Old and the New Testaments. There is, at any rate, a certain degree of harmony, of coincidence, of identity. Those views may not be the system of the Old and the New Testaments; they may not be identified with the whole of it; but they are included there, they are there contained and expressed. They are there as we find them also in the Koran of Mahomet; they are there as we find them also in the Shasters and Veds of the Hindoos. They are there as we find them expressed in various writings of

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the sages and poets of Greece. They are there as we find them put forth by devout individuals of all the varied forms of specific religion that have ever had a local habitation and a name in this world of ours. For, connected as they are with the human nature and constitution, they cannot be repressed utterly, even by systems the most unfavourable to them. They show themselves—they spring, as it were, even in the soil which has been rendered least fit by the culture of the various priesthoods which have taken upon themselves to manage the different religions of humanity. They push up through this crust,—show themselves as the gentle snowdrop does, as it pushes up through the hard frost of our winter,—show themselves as the rose-blossom, resting its lovely colours and its fragile form even upon the yet undissolved snows of the Alpine regions. They belong to human nature, and they grow in human nature, and are no more to be eradicated than those simple plants which, if they seem utterly to wither either in the frosts of winter or under the heats of a summer sun, yet, when their season comes, renew themselves again, and show themselves, with all their fertility yet unfailing, in their former habitations.

I think, from what has been already said, I should be entitled to affirm that the religious ideas have the countenance of scripture, and as just a claim to be called scriptural as many a creed which on that assumption rests its pretensions to dominion over the human mind. But, further than this, a thing remains to be done with this topic which I shall attempt this morning; that is, to cite, not merely brief expressions, scattered sentences, surrounded with a crowd of other sentences which seem to militate against them and to indicate different views,—but I shall endeavour this morning to point out certain larger passages which may be taken, not merely as corresponding with the views of this or that lecture, but with the conception of its entirety, which go to the substance and the essence of the whole. The first of these to which I shall advert is one of the compositions of that extraordinary book, the Hebrew lyric book,—the book of Psalms,—in which there is so much that is lofty, so much that is low, so many expressions of generous and confiding trust in Divine truth and benevolence, intermixed with so many effusions of bigotry, of pride, of exclusiveness, and of malignity towards

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mankind. But no finer composition than one of these does exist,—in which, with the exception of a very few words indeed, we may most entirely coincide with the views expressed. I mean the 104th Psalm,—a psalm which begins with a peculiar delineation of the majesty of God, and which then traces nature in its course, and interprets its lessons with a harmonised feeling, with a beautiful attempt to give them their full meaning and expression, as constituents of human thought employed on devotional subjects. It takes the various natural phenomena: I begin with the 10th verse, relative to springs and rivers:

"He sendeth the springs into the valleys, which run among the hills. They give drink to every beast of the field: the wild asses quench their thirst. By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation, which sing among the branches. He watereth the hills from his chambers: the earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works. He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth; and wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart. The trees of the Lord are full of sap; the cedars of Lebanon, which he hath planted; where the birds make their nests: as for the stork, the fir-trees are her house. The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats; and the rocks for the conies. He appointed the moon for seasons: the sun knoweth his going down. Thou makest darkness, and it is night: wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth. The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God. The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens. Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labour until the evening. O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches. So is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts. There go the ships: there is that leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein. These wait all upon thee; that thou mayest give them their meat in due season. That thou givest them they gather: thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good. Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and

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return to their dust. Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created; and thou renewest the face of the earth. The glory of the Lord shall endure for ever: the Lord shall rejoice in his works."

Now, here is a passage of which every religionist, whatever the dogmas of his particular theology—of which every poet, or, I might say, every human being and every child, must feel the beauty. With what fondness, with eyes that seem to love whatever they look upon, does the writer dwell on the varied phenomena which are ever presented to our human sense! What an escape to such a passage as this is it from the dogmatisings of modern theology! Think of the orthodox spiritualisings which some would have substituted for a simple and feeling description of this kind. Think of the analogies which would have been strained, and the extraordinary comparisons that would have been made. What is there comparable to this in dogmatic teaching, or in the catechising of youth, or in set and stately forms, in which conventional phrases occur again and again, confessing a malignity which no heart feels, and lamenting an evil in the world which, to the extent so described, no senses can discover? This psalm is like a beautiful summer walk. The rills are trickling by, murmuring in their course; the stately cedars and other lofty trees are spreading abroad their branches, crowned with their rich foliage; the birds are singing amongst the branches; the different tribes of animals are disporting and indulging themselves; and nature, with no ascetic principle, pours forth of her benignity, has wine to gladden the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine. And then, in the midst of this enjoyment, the writer seems, as if by a dream of the poet, to see the darkness of night coming on, to change the fertility into a wilderness; he beholds the gloom gathering over the thickness of the forest, and he hears the young lions roaring for their prey. Then, awaking from this, he gazes abroad, and there is the mighty ocean, stretching forth in its vast immensity; there go the ships, and there sport leviathan and the other monsters of the mighty deep. This is really seeing the smiling face of God in nature. This is tracing the poetry and the religion of the external physical world, as presenting themselves to the senses so that they sink into the soul.

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There is another passage to which I will advert, which coincides with this in being an expression of the generality of the views entertained in *The Religious Ideas*, but which takes them from a different point, and exhibits them in a very different phase. I allude to the passage in the 40th chapter of the prophecy of Isaiah:

"The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever."

Here we find the metaphor very different from the smiling natural scenery of the last extract. Here, couched under metaphor, we have this assertion, that the word of the Lord,—that is to say, not this or that oracle, not this or that chapter, book, or professed revelation; but the truths which we find Moses describing as a law written upon the heart of universal humanity,—that that truth in its majesty outlives the institutions, the nations, the races of men. They perish: it survives. And, as the passage goes on to tell us in the remainder of the chapter, it survives in gentleness as well as in power, leading humanity like a flock of sheep, and gently carrying those that need the shepherd's care. And this is fact; it is only another way of putting the very truths which we have already been endeavouring to elucidate. The essentials of religion are undying: specific forms change. Moses passes away, to give place to Christ. The religion claiming to be that of Christ undergoes various changes,—its Papal form yielding to its Protestant form, and that again in turn to other forms. Creeds that were extended over the most intelligent countries of the world have now only their record as outworn superstitions. But, amid all this change, there is something enduring. There is the general recognition of

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the power in which we live and move and have our being; there is a sense of moral truths that cannot change with the change of institutions. Establishments may be dissolved; Churches may become defunct; creeds and articles may be found only amongst the collections of the curious or the records of the antiquary. Modes of worship may change their expressiveness with the progress of civilisation. There may be change in all things that belong to the externality of religion, in all things even that belong to its intellectual modes; because these cannot but be affected by the growth and progress of the sciences,—ever at work in throwing new light upon the ways of Providence,—ever bringing us into contact with objects, with qualities, and with events which were unknown before. All else may change; but the simple yearning after a divine Father, a source of life; and the feeling that this is associated with brotherhood to the whole of our race; and the moral sense within us, indicating the true, the beautiful, and the good, and drawing its broad lines of discrimination between these and the opposite qualities,—these all remain. The grass withers; the flower fades; the tower tumbles down; cities and temples are cleared away: but there these stand; they stand like that ascription to the Deity which from the first recognised his power, his might, his grace, and his goodness, and which is echoed from the hearts of generation after generation.

The next entire passage to which I would refer for the purpose of this lecture is the Sermon on the Mount. I will not read the familiar words,—familiar as I hope they are,—but only advert to the general characteristics of that discourse, and, with it, of the parables of Christ, and of the other constituents of his moral teaching. It was his practice to speak respectfully of the old law, and its claim to be a divine law, under which the Jews lived. But while he spake respectfully of it, he never bowed to it unconditionally; and there are many passages in the Sermon on the Mount in which Christ, deriving his instructions direct from the human heart,—not founding them on miracles,—not asserting them to be revelations,—citing no authority for them,—but diving into the depths of his own nature to find them, thence to bring them up into light, in which to be presented to the common human reason,—and, dwelling

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on these, overrides the precepts of the ancient law, and sets them at naught. He says, "Ye have heard it said of old time, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, Forgive your enemies." Such was the general spirit of his teaching. It is not a preceptive morality; it is not a morality of servile obedience; it is the development in our nature of moral principles, keeping the appeal to the human heart as the final appeal which can be made in such a case. And this it is which constitutes the moral power of Christianity—such power as it now exercises, such power as it ever has exercised. The power of Christianity is not in its doctrines, not in its mysteries, not in its forms and external observances. These may have done something in abating cruel and absurd practices; but the power of Christianity has been in that simple moral truth which is in affinity with the dictates of our constitution, which has enabled Christianity to act upon such a variety of nations and of races,—which has stopped the flowing tears of the afflicted,—which has strengthened the fainting heart of the sorely tried,—which has guided the perplexed and the bewildered, being "a light to their feet, and a lamp unto their path,"—which, from generation to generation, has modified and softened the coarser and more violent tendencies of humanity,—and which, though too often enveloped in the clouds of form and dogma, still, through the whole, has been recognised as in harmony with the light within us—a heavenly guidance to our steps. I claim the Sermon on the Mount, with a little exception, and with some temporary Jewish matter, as in accordance—in great and general accordance—with the views of religion which have been taught in the publication to which I have before referred.

One more passage I must take, and that is the speech of Paul to the Athenians, where Paul seems to have made an effort to place the religion which he taught on the level of that high and philosophical ground which he was then occupying, and to render it not unworthy of the intelligence of the most intelligent of all nations:

"Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious,"—one of the incongruities of the received translation; it was very unlike an orator so acute and

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adaptive as Paul was to begin his speech with calling his audience superstitious,—"I perceive that in all things ye are over-religious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, To THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; . . . . and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation: that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked."

Now, with the exception of this last phrase, where Paul comes to the specific and peculiar features of Christianity, the whole of this is an appeal to human nature as that soil in which the religious ideas naturally and spontaneously grow. This broad view of religion he makes the basis of that specific teaching which he attempted afterwards ineffectually to introduce. The Athenians did not mock or laugh at this; they recognised the appeal to their own natures; they felt the force of these broad and general statements; they understood how religion was a thing belonging to humanity and to God; and it gave a jarring thought and ludicrous association when this came to be followed up and taken from the region of nature into that of miracle, and from the world's perceptions to the revelations of Judaism. Then they laughed; and at the notion of the resurrection of the dead, as it has often been taught,—at the curious scheme of gathering together ma-

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terial particles that have been scattered over the surface of the earth, and become incorporated with other bodies, with other human beings,—at that notion most thinking persons of modern times would laugh, if they heard it for the first time in their existence, and if it had not been familiarised to them from early youth by catechisms and religious teachers. Nothing else could preserve it from such associations as were excited in the minds of the Grecian people when they heard this speech of Paul. However this may be, the earlier part of the oration, all down to that passage about Christ and the resurrection, is a clear, a distinct, a forcible, a comprehensive statement of those views of religion which I believe indicate to us the true religion of human nature.

There is another passage of this apostle that I may advert to, though I need not quote it—I mean his well-known description of charity in the Epistle to the Corinthians. Charity—or love, as it had better have been rendered—is described by him in a way which makes it the production and the property of no particular religion. It is described by him in a way which makes us recognise in it the best, the most satisfactory, the happiest condition of human nature, and that in which the human nature comes nearest to the Divine. How glowing that description itself! how broad in its generality, how true in its particulars! With Paul, charity or love is not an aimless thing, a sort of abstraction of character; it is something which intertwines in all concerns. It endures; it forbears; it is kind and long-suffering; it is incapable of envy or of jealousy. And then, tracing it through these minute diversities, how grandly are his generalities expressed, giving it the preference to supernatural powers, to intellectual grandeur, even to the crown of martyrdom,—preferring it not only to all common human things with which it can be brought into comparison, but even to all other religious feelings; and his faith and hope pass away, while charity endures, eternal as the Divinity of which it is the best representation.

In all this we have, I think, coincidences—scriptural coincidences—with the views that have been here put forth. True, now, as in earlier ages, we penetrate not to any very distinct or scientific or systematic notion of these things. They must always remain to us gropings—the tellings of our

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natural instincts. We cannot give them that form which we give to a physical science; we cannot put them in that tangible shape with which we can present the artistical or industrial inventions of men. They must always have around them, as it were, a hazy atmosphere. The most intelligent Christian and the most benighted idolater—and perhaps the difference is not very great—still have to do with an "unknown God." The deities of Athens passed away; those of Rome have followed; changes and convulsions have been over the face of the earth; but still, now as then, we cannot comprehend the Almighty, nor find him out unto perfection. Here or there, one or another man may arise and boast of a revelation, and say that he will make the nations know their God as they have never known him before; but still, in spite of all, he is an unknown God; and, amid overthrown temples and ruined churches, still "that altar stands."

And now I have only to add, that I think the ideas which have arisen in the lectures I have recently delivered may throw some light on our best mode of reading the Bible—a book which humanity ever will read and ever study, and ever be the better for so doing. It should be read with reference to its character. What is the Bible? It is a history; it is a poem; it is a religion. As such it should be read. It is to be read as a history. But how? Not with implicit credence in any legendary story that may be there enshrined; not without observation, discrimination, criticism; not without the application of the same powers that have been applied to all other histories. How is the faith of nations in their origin changed? How do all histories begin? With some cosmogony, rational or irrational. They all have the same starting-point, and are all worthy of about the same degree of attention. The Greeks believed in their having sprung from the *Αὐτοχθονες*,—that is, the children of the earth,—those whom the soil itself generated; or else they traced their descent from some demigod now exalted to his place by the rulers of Olympus. Rome came from Æneas,—its first king, the child of Mars,—its first history full of preternatural events, handed down from age to age, from the kingdom to the republic, from the republic to the empire,—which was believed until of comparatively late years. We, too, were

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Trojans; we sprung from the Trojan Brutus, whose voyages and disasters and adventures have been preserved by chroniclers. Well, criticism has demolished all these dreams, or has swept them away; and we have not less truth in the world for that. We have still the legends for their poetical worth; we do not receive them with the blind credulity of children as simple historical truth. And that same criticism which works on the history of the Greek republics, which works upon the ancient history of the Romans, and makes us know more and better than did the people themselves, although they lived so much nearer the time,—that same criticism must work on the Bible also; it must distinguish the mythical from the literal; it must perceive where undue influence has been at work on records professedly historical. It must trace the motives by which they have been corrupted; it must see how priestcraft acted here, and statecraft there, and endeavoured to bind the indications of their agency in the works that have come down to us. It must separate the sterling ore from the dross; and when it has done this,—when it has cut away all that cannot be received—as there is much that cannot be received—as literal history, though it may be valuable on other accounts,—it will still leave no unimportant contribution to the record of the progress of humanity.

The Bible is a poem: a poem which seems to be formed by the concourse of different ages and of different minds, but yet which has an entireness, a unity,—which begins with the creation of the world, and ends with the dissolution of all things,—which, throughout and amid records of the most preternatural occurrences, has its beautiful and convincing appeals to nature and to the human heart,—which, while constituting in itself something like a grand epic, has its episodes, and its lyric interruptions, and its pastorals, and its diversity of songs. There is throughout the Bible a reference, in a true poetical spirit, to the beauties and the grandeur of the natural world,—that world which, in its alliance with the human mind, is itself created again, created to every individual mind, and tells us so much of the true, the good, and the beautiful. What a poem is the development in the scriptures of the conception of Divinity!—because we must not imagine for a moment that there is any truth in the notion that a sublime and

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pure conception of the Deity, at once and from the first, possessed the national mind of the Jews. We find a growing conception, giving us, at different periods, almost a different being, as their institutions and their teachers advanced, following the progress of the human intellect. For instance, if we could suppose a living spirit of the world, born with it, growing with it, linked with it in his own development,—the history of Jehovah in the Jewish scriptures would be much more like this than it is like the revelation of a spiritual and all-perfect Deity. Take the outset. At first, Jehovah is comparatively of the earth, earthy. He does not abide in the heavens; he walks in the garden in the cool of the evening; he lives on the earth; and such is the first notion of personal deities in almost all nations. He talks familiarly with human beings, such as Abraham. His residence is elevated from the earth to the clouds, and thence he rains down fire and brimstone on cities which disobey him. He has a form which may be pictured. We have it in Daniel: he is "the Ancient of days," a venerable, bearded, gigantic figure. During the residence of the Jews in Babylon he becomes more spiritualised; yet more, in the lofty declamations of many of the prophets. At first the Deity of a family, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and going with that family in its wanderings, and occupied with his presiding care over it, he afterwards becomes the ruler, the king, of a nation, and then lays claim to the sovereignty of the world. He battles with the deities of other nations; he holds his court above the clouds, where spirits resort to make their reports to him of the behaviour of mankind,—spirits that have been wandering to and fro and up and down in the earth. He is vengeful; he is "the Lord of hosts," and "a man of war;" and when the mind, tried with trouble, seeks better and kindlier attributes, when it dwells on different qualities and characteristics of the power that is above us, then he becomes, not only more spiritual, but more gracious; and through this gradual development, by a long process, we arrive at the God and Father of Jesus Christ, whom civilised nations worship, whom philosophy recognises as in harmony with its own views,—though still the wisest and best views of the best and wisest men are only growing into some slight idea of the knowledge of

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that which in its infinity and perfection must be ever unapproachable. It is a divine poem, this delineation of Jehovah in the Jewish books. It is a noble commentary, not on the attributes or conduct of Divinity, but on the growth of thought in the mind of humanity.

The Bible is to be read as a religion, as a religion not essentially enshrined in dogmas and in forms,—not a charter of priestly authority over conscience,—not an external homage, to be substituted for internal truth,—not a limitation of our faculties,—but as a sphere in which they are to be exercised, as something which ministers to the boldest thought, something which communicates to us the highest excellence. In those views—as a history, as a poem, as a religion—let the Bible be studied; for it comes to us, not commanding, not threatening with ceaseless torments if it be not accepted in every word and syllable; it comes to us in no such way as this; but presents itself like the apostle Paul in one of his missionary preachings; it says to us, "I speak as unto wise men: judge ye what I say."

I have to mention to you that, at this time of the year, there is annually a collection made here for certain poor persons, some of whom, in former days, were actively connected with the services of this chapel. The charity which I have thus to recommend is one which scarcely admits of the sort of appeal that is very often had recourse to on such occasions. It pretends to no large and munificent donations. It has not achieved what good it does realise in any striking or obtrusive manner. It is simply this: There are certain persons, now far advanced in life, one of them 88 years of age, another 75, a third 77, a fourth upwards of 70; and these are dependent on this fund I am recommending for certain small annuities,—a few shillings weekly,—which it would scarcely consist, I think, with the appearance of those now around me as to wealth and respectability, to allow to be subject to any chance of interruption or of diminution. I cannot suppose that it is needful to do more than simply to state these plain facts, which I have often had occasion, year by year, to bring before you.

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I tell you what is to be done. You see its importance at this season of the year, when the pressure is greater than usual, and when privations are multiplied for the poor and the afflicted. You see the importance of keeping up uninterrupted—I wish I could say increased—the weekly pittances which are thus bestowed. Times may change with us; we may have bright and dark seasons, and go on like the vessel bounding through sunshine and through storm; but they are past changes; the activity of life for them is over; only its monotony of privation and suffering remains; and that, I am certain, you will do something towards alleviating.

The service was concluded by singing Hymn 134.

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MORAL PHILOSOPHY AS ILLUSTRATED BY THE RELIGIOUS IDEAS.

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LECTURE I.

Moral Philosophy as illustrated by the Religious Ideas.

January 4th, 1852.

The Prayer.

With thankful minds do we acknowledge that gracious Providence which has enabled us to commence another year, placing before us its hopes, its enjoyments, its duties, and its prospects.

We render our praises to that Power which upholds us, which continues our being while it is measured out by times and seasons; and, as they pass with their varied bounties, and their varied instructions, may we receive the one with gratitude, and the other with diligent improvement! Let not their language be unheeded by us. May they mark our continuous advancement, and find us still endeavouring to harmonise ourselves with the great system of which we are a part; looking up to its Author with confidence, gratitude, and love, and round upon our fellow-creatures, anxious to render them some good, according to the ability bestowed upon us; and, by the culture of our spirits, to answer the ends of our existence here, and to fit ourselves for a better existence hereafter. As we are brought, from time to time, to those seasons by which mankind mark their progress, by which the earth shows itself in its diversified phenomena, may we be solicitous that we should ever be found, not resting on the labours of others —for other men have laboured, and we have entered into their labour—but still going forward to our high destination, endeavouring more and more to enlarge our mental stores, to extend our knowledge, to exercise our mental faculties, to perfect ourselves in every good word and work, and thus to look forward to the coming year with calmness,

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and confident reliance on Providence, and with ever-brightening expectations. As year after year passes away, sometimes we may mark the progress of humanity in the peaceful arts, whilst at other times we are compelled to notice disaster and calamity, and a seemingly retrograde movement. But, as each year passes on, may we learn reliance on those great laws by which all human things are regulated, rejoicing to trace the progress of mankind. In the past may we look at its advances in the most untoward circumstances, at the production of good out of evil, which has hitherto distinguished the progress of our race. May we look with confidence to that Power which will conduct mankind towards the promised heritage. May nations as well as individuals look forward with a hope which cannot die, and which, as it brightens and strengthens, tends to become the agency of its own accomplishment. Amen.

This was followed by singing Hymns 86 and 68.

The Lecture.

What is right? How do we know that it is right? Why should we do what is right? By what test is it to be discriminated from wrong? What is the end of life, and how is that end to be accomplished? Where shall we find the rule of life? When found, how apply it? Or, is there such a rule? These are questions which, in some form or other—not exactly as I may have put them, but substantially the same—have probably occurred to all human beings. They are questions which inevitably arise within us. One reason for their arising within us is, because we have within us a guide to the reply. They occur, I say, probably, to all beings. They would be asked substantially —if the myth in Genesis be taken literally—by Adam in paradise. Should the world be reduced to a "last man," by that "last man" they would still have to be asked. They are the questions of the sage in his study, and they are the questions of the catechised boy at school. They are asked by the savage, and not less by the civilised,—by the slave, and by the monarch. And the answers to these questions, or the sum and summary of the answers which may be given to them, and the reasons for those answers, are what we call "moral philosophy." "No," say some

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divines, "these questions are not to be answered by moral philosophy. They are not to be answered by any philosophy at all, but by something which is superior to all philosophy. They are to be answered only by the word of God." The word of God these same divines profess to have in their possession, and to be its expositors. "Well, then," I say, "if the word of God answers them, and you are the expounders of that word, give us the answer: give the public, give the world, the answer. It is your function to do so; it is the need of society; and it is the need also of the individual. Let us have that answer; and give it from Sunday to Sunday, and from year to year." Is this done? Is any thing like a reply to these queries to be found in those who profess to be the teachers of religion, and who declare at the same time that religion includes all morality, and supersedes all philosophy on the subject? Do they answer it? Are the answers at this moment occupying the tens of thousands who are instructing their fellow-creatures in what they call the way of eternal life? Do such replies constitute the sum and substance of that teaching which is established by law, or supported by voluntary contributions, or offered gratuitously, and by which the world is told that it must be guided, and by which it shall be guided, unto all that is best for humanity here or hereafter? Why, the contrary is notoriously the fact. Moral subjects do not occupy the teachings of the pulpit; they have only a very subordinate place, a very transitory notice. "A preacher of mere morality," was once an expression of suspicion and scorn for a certain class of divines amongst the clergy of the Established Church; but the scornful expression has passed away, because the thing itself has passed away. There is no longer that race of clergymen who were accused of being more familiar with Seneca and Epictetus than with St. John or St. Paul. They have vanished,—left the field to the combatants for different theologies. What we hear from pulpits—established and non-established—is not the theory of right and wrong, or the rule of life,—not the general principles of moral knowledge, nor the particular application of those general principles to the circumstances of life. It is something very different from all this. It is what you are to believe, and what torments you will be subject to if you do not believe

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rightly; and it is the cultivation of certain feelings which are to flow from that belief. The pulpit of the clergyman is not the rostrum of the moral philosopher. The objects are quite different; and when morality does come in, it is at the close, at the very fag-end, of a sermon, as an inference from, or application of, what has been mainly insisted upon, —namely, theological doctrines and theological duties. When men have been told sufficiently how they are to believe about the "Trinity in unity," and "election," and "predestination," and "the atonement," and a future state, with its endless joys or endless punishments,—and when they have been told to satiety about the duty of attending church or chapel, of hearing or of repeating prayers or praises, and of observing the ceremonies which are retained, —it is after all this that there comes a slight, a meagre modicum, which is doled out—and most inefficiently doled out—in order to supply the mind that seeks for guidance in the path of life, and is desirous of attaining to the great end of existence.

From what pulpit, at this critical time, when we know that such things are in agitation, will the operative hear whether it is morally right or morally wrong for him to strike work at the commencement of the year, and to endeavour to coerce his master into the bestowment of certain advantages which he may deem his just rights? From what pulpit will the master hear whether it is right or wrong in him to join in a combination in order to suppress what is deemed by the masters a species of insurrection on the part of those whom they employ? From what pulpit—established or non-established—would the agriculturist have heard in past days, or will he still hear, whether it be right or wrong to sustain the price of the particular commodity of food which he raises, by laws which regulate and fetter its importation from other countries? What portion of the wide field of civil and political life is occupied by those who yet profess to make known to mankind the be-all and the end-all of their existence here? We find nothing of the sort. And our schools provide for it as little as our churches. The same course is there pursued. Regular, systematic, philosophical, moral teaching, guiding man to the perception of the best ends of his existence, and the attainment of those ends,—in what schools does this

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form a prominent and efficient part of the instruction which is bestowed? Whether it is bestowed as a private speculation on the part of the teacher, or whether it is offered by public benevolence to those who are supposed to be destitute of the means of purchasing it for themselves, there is still the same routine. You have it in a somewhat more brief and comparatively simple form; you have it in the catechism instead of the creed; you have it in the teaching which is implied there, instead of in the Thirty-nine Articles; but still, there it is; it stands for morality,—or rather, it stands in the way of moral instruction. And the deficiency is so gross that the impartial observer of our schools remarks it, and remarks it with some surprise. Horace Mann—an American, and secretary of the educational establishments of New England—declares that, in his examinations of the various schools in this island, he scarcely found any children that had any distinct notions of moral right and wrong, of duty, of the end of existence, of the principles on which they were to act, or of the mode in which they should apply those principles. So wholly uninformed were the children on these simple points, that, he says, he questioned them in school after school about them, and they told him the story of Ananias and Sapphira, and how they told an untruth to the apostle Peter, and how the apostle Peter struck them dead; and that was all they knew of the matter. The uses of speech, the way in which its use should be guided, the duty to society implied in truth, the wrong to one's own soul implied in falsehood,—of all these the children knew nothing whatever. They still told the same tale over and over again of Ananias and Sapphira, and of the apostle Peter striking them dead; and if asked whether they should be struck dead if they told an untruth, they did not expect that; and no other lesson did they derive from what had been taught, than that things were very different now from the period when God miraculously punished such transgressions.

Nor can it be otherwise than that the mind should be thus confused, while we erect the preceptive portions of the Old and New Testaments into our moral standard, and look to texts for the moral instruction of every age. In an admirable article in the *Westminster Review*, just published, the ethics of Christendom are analysed, and it is shown

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what an egregious blunder is committed by the clergy in assuming that the precepts of the New Testament are entirely, and in an unqualified manner, as if of Divine authority, and prescribing the rule of right to be transferred to the present time. The writer points out one fact which alone must necessarily make a very broad distinction. It is this. He shows—what has been often shown by critics before, though scarcely so applied to this particular branch of the subject—that the apostles themselves, and their disciples generally of that first age, anticipated an end of the then existing state of things within their own lifetime,—that, before they died, they anticipated the coming of the Lord Jesus in the clouds of heaven, with great glory,—that the world with all its then arrangements was to come entirely to an end, and the kingdom of Christ was then to commence,—that he would then judge mankind, and establish his enduring reign of righteousness. The writer argues, and justly argues, that people with such a notion as this—whether disciples, apostles, or whatever they were—must have had their moral system, their moral conceptions and precepts, most largely affected by it. That would become their duty which, looking forward to a continuous duration of the world, does not become men's duty. A peculiar set of things to be avoided, and of things to be done, would arise out of this notion. And they did so arise. Hence the scriptural injunction, so inconsistent with any enlightened view of moral duty at the present day, not to care for the morrow,—that those who had possessions and connections were to be as though they had them not, because "the fashion of this world" was passing away. These precepts our divines apply to the present time,—the expectation having long ago expired; having died out as that generation of believers died out; but there has been no moral substitute for the injunctions which they adopted under these influences. They are still repeated; and people will tell you from the pulpit, and thousands will listen and reverently reeeive it, that we have here no continuing city,—that things temporal are in contrast with things eternal,—and that we should repudiate the one and cleave to the other; always stopping short of any very practical application of these notions. The people who tell you this will not do like those who sold their property, and forthwith

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distributed the proceeds amongst their brother-believers. They will not go to those practical results. They do not live as if their possessions were not worth fifty years' purchase. They are not withheld, by this passing away of the fashion of the world, from buying long annuities, which have a great many years yet to run. They are not stopped from the purchase even of a forty-shilling freehold. They are not kept back from industrious efforts to realise a provision for their families after their death. Nothing of this kind occurs; and yet they go on repeating those things in which they manifestly have no practical faith.

There is another reason—not noticed by the writer I have referred to—why the morality of the New Testament, or a large portion of it, is inapplicable to the present time. It is, that the believers of the first age not only anticipated a speedy termination of the existing state of things, but they also held themselves to be living under a preternatural dispensation. They were to take no care about temporal matters, not only because the world was coming to an end, but because, while the world lasted, they were freed from the obligation to observe those natural laws which are incumbent on all who would provide for themselves and those dependent on them subsistence and comforts in the world. They were to take no care about meat, drink, or clothing. They were to be as free from the cares of this world as the sparrow for whom God careth, being of more value than many sparrows; and when they went out on their missionary expeditions, they were to take no change of raiment, no store in their bag or scrip, but they were to rely entirely upon a preternatural dispensation, which was to find them material conveniences. Well, this would give rise to a variety of precepts that would not apply to us, who must work if we would eat,—who must consult the laws of nature if we would preserve ourselves in health and strength,—who must give toil, or something equivalent to it, if we would purchase conveniences and enjoyments, and surround ourselves with them so as to make the most of life. There was one preacher of late years who took those things in their original meaning, and who honestly and entirely jumped over the vast chasm that divides the present from the apostolic age,—I mean the late Edward

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Irving. Preaching a missionary discourse, he told the missionaries they were all wrong, with their societies and their funds, with their salaries and allowances, and with all that enormous outlay which they were making to extend the kingdom of Christ. He expounded to them, very clearly and conclusively, from the scriptures, that this was not at all the way in which to set about such an errand,—that missionaries should go forth with their bag and staff, and no further provision whatsoever, and rely upon Providence to take care of them, and to secure the results of their mission. His doctrine did not suit the missionary societies at all; and, I believe, in no instance was it adopted by them. But still it was that which the founders, promoters, and subscribers to those societies professed to believe,—that which they still profess to believe from Sunday to Sunday, —and that which they must believe if the scriptures really are the oracular declaration of moral duty for all ages and all nations, as they so solemnly declare. And this it is that we spend millions upon millions annually for teaching, which profits very little, which is chiefly confined to the solving of dark theological conundrums, but which comes not home to the business and bosoms of men.

The best teachers of moral philosophy, the best guides and helps that we possess for prosecuting any thing like the study of that philosophy, have been laymen. It was so in ancient times, amongst the Hebrews or the Greeks, and it is so with us English in modern times. Look at that valuable little volume, Lord Bacon's *Essays*. Some taint of a worldly spirit upon it indeed there may be, such as was characteristic of its nevertheless great and mighty-minded author; but still, how full, in a simple form, of grand truths,—how full of superb pictures for the imagination,—what a companion,—how often of use in enabling us to pierce to the truth through the mists of prejudice and falsehood! What divine has produced a manual that can be laid by the side of it? When we find moral philosophy assuming a more scientific form, what are the names that present themselves,—some taking that theory which resolves all into utility and calculation, and makes virtue an intellectual product,—others embracing that theory which resolves morality into the genuine tendencies of our nature, the dictates of our faculties, our pure and unsophisticated

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impulses? but whether we take the one or the other of these theories, what is the next set of names that presents itself in the early history of moral philosophy as recorded in this country? Hobbes of Malmesbury, Shaftesbury, Hume, Smith,—all of them notoriously sceptics,—all of them evidently and avowedly disaffected towards Christianity, and not enthusiastic, or believing, perhaps, in any defined or specific form of religion; but, laymen, doubters as they were, still they take the advance, they take the lead of the clergy, in inviting us to the pursuit of moral science, and in offering us helps for its cultivation. Let us descend lower in the chronological course. We have Dr. Hartley, a physician, expounding the nature of man in a bold and original manner, and deducing from his theory —that all our faculties and passions are resolvable into the association of ideas—his moral theory also, and his practical rules of life. If we descend further, we still find the names of laymen eminent in this teaching; here and there, but rarely, a divine. There were Dr. Paley, indeed, and one or two other clergymen, who did some little towards it, the worth of which I may have occasion to advert to in a subsequent lecture. If we come to more recent times, we have one valuable book—though disfigured by a subsequent recantation of its best portions—that of Dr. Hampden, the present Bishop of Hereford. But, then, we have, amongst laymen, Bentham, who, after working out his utilitarian theory in reference to the whole extent of political science, applies it also to morals, in his *Deontology*. We have the posthumous work of Sidney Smith, at the head, indeed, of the clerical contribution; but of far more value is that of the late Dr. Brown, of Edinburgh: also such works as that of George Combe, *On the Constitution of Man, and its relation to External Objects*. Whilst, for historian of the whole of ethical philosophy, we have Sir James Mackintosh, a lawyer.

Here, then, you see the Church has taken the money, assumed all the dignity and power of the possession, and the laymen have done all the work. For what we have the means of acquiring of moral philosophy, for our estimate of it as a science, for our helps to it as a clue to the pursuit, we must go to the laity, and not to the clergy. And it has always been so, from the very

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beginning. To whom do we owe the best portions of our Bible? To whom do we owe the Psalms, the practical wisdom of the Proverbs, the sublime poetry of the prophecies? Not to the priesthood of Judæa. They are not found amongst the authors of these works. The psalmists were laymen; the author or collector of the Proverbs was a layman; the prophets were all, or almost all, laymen. It is not in the priestly class of Judæa,—it is not in those who, if the theory of inspiration had been true, would have been the most eminent possessors of that inspiration,—it is not amongst them that we find the best teaching, that which most tends to regulate life, that which most tends to exalt character and feeling. In ancient Judæa, as in modern England, we must go to the lay student, to the philosopher rather than to the divine, for valuable instruction on these important matters.

Do not let it be supposed that in saying this I am by any means undertaking to propound any thing like a system of moral philosophy. Do such a thing in six lectures! Why, sixty would be very inadequate to the task. Nor is it, perhaps, a subject that can be best taught in that way. It requires a more regular attention, more uninterrupted teaching, a more sedulous application of the mind when the voice of that instruction ceases to be heard by the hearer, than I am likely to be able to give here, or you, haply, to receive here. What I can do is mainly this. I can set before you—as I mean to do, in these six lectures—some thoughts, in rather a miscellaneous way perhaps, on this great subject. I may say something in the way of stimulating the thoughts of others; may throw out some suggestions, which, in particular circumstances, may be useful for guidance to those who are entering upon an intellectual pursuit of this kind. I can also advert to publications on the subject; and, without any attempt to criticise them, or to condense their contents for you, I may in a few words remark on each what is its peculiar principle,—whether, to my apprehension, that principle be sound or unsound,—whether the book deserve your attention, or do not deserve it. And this is the most to which I look as practicable in the few Sundays the use of which is now before me in this place.

I mentioned just now, as a valuable work on this sub-

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ject, George Combe's book, *On the Constitution of Man, and its relation to External Objects.* It is, I think, one of the most valuable books, as relating to the foundation of moral philosophy, that have been produced; and it is a happy circumstance that it is an exceedingly cheap work, within the reach of all, in a plain, unadorned, but intelligible style; which, if it has little to attract, has, at any rate, nothing to repel from the consideration of the matter which is there placed before us. I hold that work to be very valuable on two accounts. One is, that it goes to the real fountain of moral philosophy, in order to derive its lessons. The writer does not apply himself to the utilitarian calculation, and wisely not; for the elements are too numerous and subtle. He does not apply himself to verbal precept, and wisely not; for verbal precept must always be ambiguous, and susceptible of different interpretations. He does not apply himself to example even—of more value, perhaps, than either calculation or precept—for example will apply only to similarly constituted beings, surrounded by similar circumstances. We often hear of the perfect example of Christ; we honour its moral beauty and moral grandeur; but what analogy have our circumstances with his? We contemplate it, and the gratified sense of moral beauty may purify the mind, and put it in a better condition for attention to its own business; but its own business is a widely dissimilar business from that in which he was engaged. So the author of the work to which I am alluding goes directly to human nature. He construes human nature according to the lights of phrenology. I cannot altogether go with him there; but the phrenology is of very little import; it might be cut out of the book, and the book would be none the worse. The classification of the faculties would remain the same; their distribution into animal, intellectual, and moral,—the view of our nature would be substantially the same; and in that nature he teaches us to find the guidance to that which we ought to be and to do, considering our various relations with external objects. And it is for this explicit appeal to human nature, —it is for thus going to the very source and test of all morals,—that I hold the book to be so valuable and so useful as a help to the student of moral philosophy. There is another reason besides this why it is valuable. In going

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to our nature, he recognises the power of that nature to discriminate and to judge. He supposes that as the taste tells us the difference between the sweet and the sour, so—either at once, by a moral instinct, or by direct tendency in the production of the requisite state of mind, without any long processes—the human being may discover and feel an affinity with the right, and discriminate it from the wrong. He does more than this: the work is valuable as discriminating the various laws under which we live, and which are very often, by professed moralists, strangely jumbled together. With our composite being, we live under several sets of laws, capable of being harmonised, capable also of separate action, with their separate sanctions. There are the mechanical laws, obvious to almost the slightest observation; there are the chemical laws, relating to other and finer substances, to other and nicer combinations; there are the vital laws, or those by which matter is modified in consequence of its coming into contact with an organisation endowed with that which we call life. There are the intellectual laws, by which cause and effect, in matters belonging to the understanding, as surely succeed one another as they do in the material world, and under the mechanical agencies; and there are the moral, the spiritual laws, by which the higher functions and tendencies of our being have their regulation also, and their natural rewards and punishments.

Now, the aim of the moral philosopher is to recognise these laws, each in its particular sphere, and then to observe their combination, for the production of the greatest amount of existence, of life, and of good. They cannot infringe upon one another; the observance of a moral law does not exempt a man from the operation of a physical law, nor will it enable him to escape the punishment of violating that physical law. The ship with a rotten plank in it will sink, though it may bear a freight of the purest moral worth. Not long since, a large boat, full of persons returning from a place of worship—across the Severn, I think—was swamped, and every soul on board perished; their piety did not save them. Their gratitude to God, or their trust in Providence, was of no avail against the terrors of the rushing flood; their lives were not more safe from the tempest by reason of the

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consecrated use which they had been making of life and power. They infringed a physical law, in trusting to that which was inadequate to the conflict with the waves; and they were punished, as the penalty of violating that physical law. The benevolent man, who wishes to enlighten his fellow-creatures, who is eager to introduce new and grand principles into society, perils his health by the energy of his exertions; he disregards the physical law. I am telling the history now of an actual case. His fervour in teaching, his energy in proselytising—though it may be the very best teaching that he gives, and though it may be the greatest good to which he is proselytising—will not prevent the action of the elements upon the delicate portions of his constitution. He ruptures a blood-vessel; he falls the victim of his own good. Why, Howard himself died of the gaol-fever. Physical law will not be trifled with; no more will moral law. The latter may be broken, and yet a man may so consult his own safety as to pass in a vessel that can defy the storm, and breast the billows in the most perilous voyage; but this will not save him from the stings of recollection, from the agonies of memory, from the writhings of remorse. These different sets of laws have all their own sanctions; they inflict penalties and they reward in their own sphere; and it is only the dream of enthusiasm that even the lowest of them will be suspended in consequence of the most undeviating obedience to the highest of them.

These are the reasons—these truths too much passed over and disregarded—why I mention that book as well worth attention. I may have occasion, in the course of subsequent lectures, to mention others. I will only add now, that this pursuit is assuredly one of high dignity; for moral philosophy has to do with the best and grandest thoughts of which our nature is capable. In the immediate practical application of it, we may be dwelling amongst the things of earth, but they look the grander for the light of heaven which is thus shed upon them. Not the highest of objects, not the infinite and eternal, are excluded from its consideration. It is a science whose elements are not those of gross matter; the agencies with which it is conversant are not those of mechanical action; but they have their relation to the finest of our thoughts and feelings, to the

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purest and the noblest of our pursuits. Moral philosophy is the science, not merely of being, but of well-being,—of living so as to make it life to live, and answer the great object of our existence. "Know thyself," was the famed and oracular response of the ancient world; and it designates the most important science to the modern world, as it once did to the ancient. There is no other science so widely applicable: for what comes not under the jurisdiction of moral philosophy? It teaches us to estimate all things at their true importance. It judges the insurrections of nations and the crimes of usurpers. It judges the philosopher and the poet. It deals with matters of fact, and with those which appeal only to taste and to imagination. It penetrates the truth of history; and by insight into men's motives, and the springs of character, and the working of influences, it pierces through a cloud of falsehood, and makes us know the men and the events of times long gone by. It has to deal with the whole compass of human knowledge; nay, religion, in one view, is but the machinery that realises its aims. It is by that germ in man—his finest and most perfect character—that the rites, the ordinances, and observances of religion, and the expressions of devotion, have their being and their use. To the individual it gives the means of achieving the most that can be done with his faculties and opportunities. He learns by it how to cultivate them to their best maturity; he knows himself and he knows others.

And what is there of harmony in the world, what is there of useful influence in the world, without something of this knowledge, though it may not be systematically obtained or formally applied? It is only by the observation of others—it is only by realising in them our conceptions of the general truths of moral philosophy—that we mark the features by which one differs from another, —that we cease clumsily to apply the same remedies to moral diseases, which have distinctions either in their own nature or in the subject which is under their influence. It is by this that we convert good intentions into good actions; a connection which is very often indeed broken by those who blunder with the best principles, but without the knowledge, the wisdom, the philosophy, that should be their guidance. And for nations, as well as for individuals,

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what better can be desired than that every community should be thoroughly instructed, as far as instruction can achieve the object that it requires? That object regards individual thought and mind: what better than that this should be amongst its most general attainments? Oh, were but a slight fraction of the exertions, the influence, the institutions, the establishments, which are bestowed upon theological dogmas, applied to the encouragement of this study in our schools and in our churches—making the great machinery of teaching subservient to real, practical teaching of the guidance of life, and to the elevation of human life throughout the community—how greatly should we reap good by such a change! It would tend to elevate and ennoble the national character; it would claim for our country what has been grandly called her national prerogative, of "teaching the nations how to live." It would gain the reverence of other countries; it would secure that dominion over the world — a sort of universal empire of thought and wholesome influence—which is as much above commercial supremacy as commercial supremacy is above military despotism.

The service was concluded by singing Hymns 14 and 40.

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LECTURE II.

Moral Philosophy as illustrated by the Religious Ideas (*continued*).

January 11th, 1852.

The service was commenced by singing Hymn 67.

The Prayer.

Resting with confidence, full of thankful recollections and of trusting hopes, would we adore that universal benevolence which giveth liberally and upbraideth not.

We worship that Power which causeth the sun to shine, the rain to descend upon the good and upon the evil, for the just and for the unjust, which extends its beneficence over the whole surface of the globe, which causes the seasons to bring forth their several productions, and to fulfil their errands of mercy to mankind; that Power which kindles up the sun, and rolls the planets in their courses; which, from the minutest atom to the remotest star, is every where present and every where blessing. We worship that God with ever grateful and ever relying hearts. May our spirits partake of this love, so universal, so exalted, and so enduring! May it penetrate our minds! may it characterise our devotions! may it influence our lives! may it be at once the source of enjoyment to ourselves, and a bond uniting us with our fellow-creatures! May we endeavour to render to all whatever it is within the reach of our ability to bestow, and, by doing that good, reap for ourselves the best good—the joy at beholding the diminution of evil and the production of good, and the extension of human happiness!

May we feel for sorrow, for suffering, and for evil, and look upon this world, with all its changing scenes, as still under a presiding Power, which out of evil educes good, ever making evil subservient to good, and which still works out its own munificent plans of happiness, of goodness, of knowledge, and of eternal progress!

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In our own minds and lives, and in the minds and lives of those in whom we are interested throughout society, in the world at large, may we still see that great law of progress exemplified, in conformity with which the human race has advanced through all ages—in conformity with which man reaches his highest enjoyments—in conformity with which, when this mortal scene closes on our eyes, we shall continue our career, "shining brighter and brighter till the perfect day," the work begun in us and in others being carried on till we are filled with all the fulness of God! Amen.

This was followed by singing Hymns 142 and 60.

The Lecture.

The moral sciences, as they are called, have scarcely yet that claim to the appellation which is possessed by the physical sciences. The combinations of chemistry, the abstractions of geometry, have in them a distinctness, a certainty, a precision, which is not yet attained in moral speculations. In fact, as we pass from the region of matter to that of mind, though the guidance in practice may not be less, or scarcely less, certain, the coherence and completeness of the speculations considerably fail us. There is, when we leave things visible and tangible to reason upon those which are neither the one nor the other, an ambiguity scarcely to be avoided. We find it even with the teachers on such topics, and those who have laboured most diligently and most successfully. Some of the works of which I have spoken most strongly in my former lecture do not bear the title of moral philosophy at all. Combe writes on the constitution of man in its relation to external objects. Hartley writes on man physically, intellectually, and morally. Bentham writes on deontology. And if we take the works that bear the title of moral philosophy, the title often turns out no very sure guidance to the contents of the work. For instance, the treatise of Dr. Hampden, now Bishop of Hereford, on moral philosophy, consists of critical and historical dissertations on the best mode of studying the subject—on securing ourselves from the influences of theological dogma —on making use of the great authors of antiquity, whose

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works he earnestly recommends with a view to this subject. If we take up Professor Whewell's treatise on moral philosophy, we find him appealing to law—to the statute-law of the country—and from that, through other forms and modifications of human law, to that which he deems divine law, as embodied in the preceptive portions of the Old and the New Testaments. If we take up Dr. Brown's moral philosophy, we find eloquent and able descriptions of the higher instincts and tendencies of our nature. Jeremy Bentham's work is a mere calculation of consequences; Paley's is a mixed one, of precept and of calculation; while the moral philosophy of the late Sidney Smith is an analysis of the intellectual powers of human nature—memory, reason, imagination, and so on. And yet, though there is this sort of ambiguity, this want of coherence, still, in fact, all these works do relate to portions of the great subject, the study of which may have been founded on the principles of our nature and constitution, the helps to which may be derived from laws enacted by human legislators, where public opinion and the calculation of consequences are brought to bear on the question, and which may be illustrated by those precepts which some have given and others have received as of divine authority. In fact, they indicate that which may lead us to the attainment of the object which I take to be the end of moral philosophy—the description of that way of life which is indicated by the human constitution.

There is a similar difficulty to encounter in the terminology of moral philosophy. Its terms are derived from the senses: they have their physical meaning; they are only metaphorically applied when they are used as the materials of scientific workmanship in moral philosophy. We talk of the right and the wrong. What are they? The real origin of the idea is expressed in the geometrical axiom: "A right line is that which lies evenly between its two points, or that which is the shortest distance between its two points." It is right—that is to say, it is conformed to the rule by which it has been professedly made. Deviating from this, it is wrong—that is, it is wrung or contorted from its proper purpose. The tree grows right and straight, with its tapering stem rising from the ground; or it is twisted, contorted, wrung—wrong as to its natural growth, its branches being turned in a particular way by

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the application of some external power; and though this be wrong as to the natural growth of the tree, yet, in the other and metaphorical sense of the word, it is right, for the purpose of making it more convenient or more fruitful, for which that deflection is produced upon it. What is the word "duty"? It signifies that which is due to any body; it is a metaphor from a pecuniary debt. "Ought" is that which we owe, which is owed to some one—as gratitude is due or owed to the bestower of a bounty. We have still merely a secondary and symbolical use of these terms, nor can we have any other, rising as language does, in the first instance, from the names of objects of sense. It is so through all the varieties of terms. What is vice? The original meaning of the word—*vitium*—is a spot, a flaw, a blemish, a stain. We apply this even to a horse whose formation or whose habits render him less useful to man or less beautiful in himself than he might be. Although no moral pravity is attached to the term in such a use, yet we call that a vice in him which mars his perfection as a horse. So virtue—derived from *vir*, man—is that which is manly—that which becomes a man—physical courage chiefly, according to the ancient use of the word by the Romans: with those who have higher views of that which constitutes the dignity and recommendation of human nature, it takes a more extended sense. When we use the term "humanity," we render homage to our nature for the mild, the kind, the noble, and the generous qualities of which it is inclusive. The very fact, however, of the physical derivation of the terms of moral philosophy—of their origination in the meaning of the simplest objects of sensuous perception—shows us that there is a basis for this study in nature, that there are directions and suggestions and indications of the best way of life in nature.

And the extent to which views of this subject have coincided,—an extent similar to that which I endeavoured to trace in reference to the religious ideas—our conceptions of Deity, of providence, of heaven,—that extent is of itself an argument that we have a solid and a firm basis for moral speculation, however far short we may yet fall of giving to it that completeness and that exactness which are attainable in many of the physical sciences. My present purpose is to give a specimen of the extent to which morality is iden-

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tical in the human race. If we look round the world—if we search for a nation which has been, by its peculiar laws or position, independent of the external influences that have borne upon other nations—if we take a people on whom none of the religions of the world—Jewish, Christian, Greek, or Mahometan—has exercised a commanding influence, or been incorporated with their institutions—if we take a people most remarkably and singularly cut off from the rest of the world, partakers in the civilisation neither of antiquity nor of modern times, and yet having a civilisation of their own of no small degree of refinement—and if, in such a people, we find a recognition of the broad outlines of morality, as they were held by the ancients, as they are held by the moderns, as they are held in Mahometan and in Christian countries,—I should say that this was a very remarkable illustration of the tendency of human nature to indicate a certain course or way of life as that which is deservedly recognised as good, true, virtuous, happy, or by whatever name we may call that which we regard with complacency in ourselves and in others. Now, there is an instance exactly of the kind which I have been supposing. There is a country in that very singular and peculiar position, partaking neither of ancient nor of modern civilisation, acknowledging neither the Christian religion, nor the Mahometan, nor the Jewish, nor the prevalent forms of mythology,—and in that people we find a delineation of morality. I refer to a curious document, translated some few years ago, in reference to a people of whom greater intercourse has yet given us but very imperfect notions. I mean the Chinese—a people cut off, as I have been describing, from the rest of the world—a people having neither the science nor the prejudices of other nations, though they may have science and prejudices of their own—a people distinguished by some most remarkable and peculiar features, of which not one of the least is this—that they hold a doctrine common in Christendom as a theological doctrine, but which they apply to human legislation. We call it barbarism in them—divinity in ourselves. I allude to the doctrine of substitution. Not very long ago an American sailor killed a Chinese. The murderer could not be found; but the Chinese seriously demanded of the American captain that he should give up one of his sailors to them to be put to

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death instead of the murderer, who was not forthcoming. Nay, there is said to be a practice there, at this very day, of enduring legal punishment by substitute; and there are said to be those who are willing to suffer capital punishment as substitutes, for the sake of a pecuniary compensation, which they leave to their families. We call this barbarous, and in the next breath we ascribe it to the God we worship. What is this but the genuine principle of that doctrine which is the basis and essence of modern orthodox theology—the doctrine of substitution—the punishment of one being in the place of another being—of the innocent for the guilty? The greater part of the Christian world expects to be saved because their sins were punished in the person of Christ the innocent. Their Deity is made to declare, as in Milton's *Paradise Lost:*

> "Die he, or justice must; unless for him
> Some other, able and as willing, pay
> The rigid satisfaction, blood for blood."

And having based our worship and our hopes of salvation and our conception of the Divine character upon this foundation, we then turn round, when we see the Chinese actually practising it, and lift up our hands and eyes in amazement at their barbarism. It would be well if they were to get rid of their barbarism in legislation, nor much amiss if we got rid of our barbarism in theological doctrine.

While we know as yet very little of their literature or manners, as I said, we know something of their morality, of their recognised rules and principles of morality. And we have these in a document called "The Sacred Edict." There is a translation of it by a missionary, the Rev. William Milnes. It is entitled "The Sacred Edict: containing sixteen maxims of the Emperor Kang-he, the second of the present dynasty, amplified by his son, the Emperor Yoong-Ching; together with a paraphrase on the whole by a Mandarin." These maxims are of such importance, that copies of them are hung up in all their public offices; in fact, they are to them what the Ten Commandments are to the great majority of people in this country. I shall read these sixteen maxims, with one or two extracts from the authentic and authoritative commentaries which are appended to them, premising this—that

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they are all moral, and not religious; for in these commandments the Chinese begin with human duties to human beings. It would be a very unsafe inference from this that they have no religion. They are a religious people, and their mystical deity Joss, who has three faces, is said to typify the past, the present, and the future; and there are teachings connected with that which go very deep into metaphysical lore. They have no state religion; but they have a popular and a prevalent religion, identified in many respects with the Buddhism of the more intelligent of the Hindoos. Their first maxim is this: "Pay just regard to filial and fraternal duties, in order to give due importance to the relations of life." Here is an evident coincidence with the ten commandments of Moses. The first of those which relates to human duties, and not to theology, regards the duty to parents: it is called "the first commandment with promise." It is the only one of the Ten Commandments which is altogether positive; the rest are all negative. They are prohibitory; they say: "Thou shalt not have other gods besides me; thou shalt not do this or that; thou shalt not work on the sabbath; thou shalt not steal, kill," and so on. And there is a meaning in that negative character in the decalogue. It is a testimony, an unconscious and an unheeded testimony, to human nature. It shows that prohibition is reckoned a better commencement of moral teaching than suggestion and impulse; that there is the good power within us, and the good tendency; and that the work of the lawgiver is to fence it round, to guard mankind from wandering into that which is evil, rather than to impel and direct them in that which is good. That is left to other and more enduring principles and influences. The maxim I have quoted extends the Mosaic injunction of reverence for parents to fraternal regards. It shows its origin in a time when families were amalgamating themselves into societies and communities; it indicates that reverence for age which prevails through the East; it enforces duties which arise out of our primary physical relations; it is in agreement in this with the common sense of all mankind, although one does not see the necessity of putting up a direction in such a case in the form of a precept. Nature enforces it without precepts. Who was ever led to cultivate such regards, such acknow-

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ledgments of superiority, such recognitions as the fraternal tie, from the dry habit of obedience to a law? The real law which enforces them is the law written in the heart; and it would enforce them were there no such external maxim, precept, or commandment.

The next maxim extends the inculcation of kindness to those more distantly connected: "Respect kindred, in order to display the excellence of harmony." That is, in order to exhibit to the world a picture of what mutual forbearance, mutual kind offices and help, and mutual sympathies will do. Exhibit them on a small scale, that they may be learned and cultivated and practised upon a larger scale. The third maxim extends these directions yet further. The author of them has seemingly followed the conceptions of those writers of our own time who have compared the kindlier affections of our nature to the effect of a stone thrown into water—the small circle which it produces at first gradually widening and extending, until it becomes faint, being lost in its very extension. The third maxim is, "Let concord abound among those who dwell in the same neighbourhood, in order to prevent litigations." Neighbourhood—a thing scarcely known in large congregations of population—is still of importance in districts of a different kind, having its good and its evil; allowing of an interference from which the independent inhabitants of a crowded city are free, and which may very often be a nuisance and tend to ill, but creating also a sort of limited public opinion,—which acts powerfully upon the individual, sometimes for right and sometimes for wrong—which does not rise above the mistakes of public opinion—which does not correct conventional errors—which enforces conformity with custom, even when custom is not in conformity with what is true and just—which thus leads us to that balance, in different modes and conditions of social life, in which we find that an increase of good is generally compensated by some production of evil, and the reverse. On this maxim there is a paraphrase by the second emperor whose name was mentioned, from which I will read a short extract:

"Let those who dwell together reflect on this: If you hate me and I hate you, we may contract an enmity which shall continue, not only through the whole of our lives, but

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which may not be eradicated from the breasts of our children of the latest posterity. Will not this prove to be the bitter fruits of misery, the seeds of which we ourselves have planted?"

The fourth maxim is, "Give the chief place to husbandry and the culture of the mulberry-tree, in order to procure adequate supplies of food and raiment"—these being the chief occupations of the country, though they indicate a state which greater communication with the outer world must necessarily change. The fifth is, "Hold economy in estimation, in order to prevent the lavish waste of money"—a maxim which is assuredly not less worthy of observation than that Christian injunction which tells us to take no heed for the morrow. The sixth maxim is, "Magnify academical learning, in order to direct the scholar's progress." There is throughout these maxims, and generally in Chinese morals, an attention to, a recognition of, the claims of learning and scholarship which might well be imitated in other countries. In this instance, the amplification of the second emperor lets us see into a state of society which, perhaps, one would scarcely have anticipated.

"Of old, families had their schools, villages their academies, districts their colleges, and the nation her university. Of consequence no one was left uninstructed. Places were appointed to which the scholars repaired, and a literary mandarin set over them as a general superintendent. By these means human talent was perfected and manners were improved. The intelligent, the simple, the bold, and the timid were reduced to one rule. Our sacred father, the benevolent emperor, attained to venerable old age, elevated the people, purposely magnified the schools, and left nothing that regarded the scholar's improvement and the mode of instruction unprepared.

"The scholar is the head of the four classes of the people. The respect that others show to him should teach him to respect himself, and not degrade his character. When the scholar's practice is correct, the neighbourhood will consider him a model of manners. Let him therefore make filial and fraternal duties the beginning, and talent the end; place enlarged knowledge first, and literary ornaments last. Let the books he reads be all orthodox, and the companions he chooses all men of approved charac-

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ter. Let him adhere rigorously to propriety, and watchfully preserve a sense of shame, lest he ruin himself and disgrace the walls of his college, and lest that, after having become famous, the shadows of conscious guilt and shame should haunt him under the bed-cover. He who can act thus is a scholar.

"But there are some who keenly contend for fame and gain, and act contrary to their instructions—learn strange doctrines and crooked sciences, not knowing the exalted doctrine. Giving wild liberty to their words, they talk bigly, but effect nothing. Ask for the name, and they have it; search for the reality, and they are void of it."

The seventh maxim is undoubtedly somewhat of a questionable character; at the same time, it is one which is not infrequently—if not in express terms, yet in spirit and in substance—recommended in this country. It is, "Degrade strange religions, in order to exalt the orthodox doctrine." Amongst strange religions the Chinese reckon the Christian religion, which had found its way into that country some considerable time ago—which the Jesuits were the means of fixing there to a certain extent—which they saved from total annihilation at one period by their astronomical knowledge, and by the performance of calculations to which the Chinese were not competent. The strange religions which are to be degraded number among them Christianity; and perhaps it may be useful in this case, as Burns says, "to see oursels as ithers see us"—to see what the Chinese thought of these missionaries of the "true faith" amongst them. The paraphrase says:

"Even the sect of Teen-Chu" (which is their version of Jehovah), "who talk about heaven and chat about earth, and of things without shadow and without substance—this religion is also unsound and corrupt. But because they" (the European teachers of the sect) "understand astronomy and are skilled in the mathematics, therefore the government employs them to correct the calendar. That, however, by no means implies that their religion is a good one. You should not on any account believe them. The law is very rigorous against all these left-hand-road and side-door sects. Their punishment is determined the same as that of the masters and mistresses of your dancing gods" (male and female conjurors). "Government enacted this law to

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prohibit the people from doing evil, and to encourage them to do good—to depart from corruption, and to revert to truth—to retire from danger, and to advance to repose."

Thus appeared Christianity to them; thus it still appears to them. They marvel at the strangeness and the absurdity of our theological doctrine, whilst they admire our scientific attainments and our artistical skill. As was observed not very long ago, by a mandarin who had been in communication with Europeans, and as to whom the opportunity was taken to apprise him of the notions of orthodox Christianity, "It is very extraordinary that a people should make such good watches, and yet believe such nonsense."

"*Maxim* 8. Explain the laws, in order to warn the ignorant and obstinate.

"9. Illustrate the principles of a polite and yielding carriage, in order to improve manners.

"10. Attend to the essential employments, in order to give unvarying determination to the wish of the people.

"11. Instruct the youth, in order to prevent them from doing evil.

"12. Suppress all false accusing, in order to secure protection to the innocents.

"13. Warn those who hide deserters, that they may not be involved in their downfall.

"14. Complete the payment of the taxes, in order to prevent frequent urging."

This and the preceding and following maxims are evidently maxims of state convenience, rather than of personal morality.

"15. Unite the *paon* and *kea*" (that is, something equivalent to the "tithings" and "hundreds" in our Saxon division of the country), "in order to extirpate robbery and theft.

"16. Settle animosities, that lives may be duly valued."

We have here a pretty fair outline of the social duties, —of that conduct which is desirable between man and man, and which tends to keep society together. We have it from a strange quarter, a remote quarter—more distant in thought and habits, government, manners, and customs, than it is by the wide space that separates it from us. Now, side by side with this, I will place a short extract from a treatise on popular education by that acute reasoner

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the late Mr. James Mill. It was published in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and afterwards reprinted. Treating of education, he thus adverts to the moral portion of it:

"Conceive that a man knows the materials which can be employed as means, and is prompt and unerring in the mode of combining them; all this power is lost if there is any thing in his nature which prevents him from using it. If he has any appetite in his nature which leads him to pursue certain things with which the most effectual pursuit of happiness is inconsistent, so far this evil is incurred. A perfect command, then, over a man's appetites and desires —the power of restraining them whenever they lead in a hurtful direction—that possession of himself which insures his judgment against the illusions of the passions, and enables him to pursue constantly what he deliberately approves, is indispensably requisite to enable him to produce the greatest possible quantity of happiness. This is what the ancient philosophers called temperance,—not exactly the same with what is called the virtue or grace of temperance in theological morality, which includes a certain portion—in the doctrines of some theological instructors, a very large portion—of abstinence, and not only of abstinence, or the gratuitous renunciation of pleasure, but the infliction of voluntary pain. This is done with a view to please the god or object of worship, and to provide, through his favour, for the happiness of the second or future life. The temperance of the ancient philosophers had a view only to the happiness of the present life, and consisted in the power of resisting the immediate propensity, if yielding to it would lead to an overbalance of evil, or prevent the enjoyment of a superior good, in whatever the good or evil of the present life consists. The resisting power consists of two parts—the power of resisting pleasure, and that of resisting pain, the last of which has an appropriate name, and is called 'fortitude.'

"These two qualities—the intelligence which can always choose the best possible means, and the strength which overcomes the misguiding propensities—appear to be sufficient for the happiness of the individual himself, to the pursuit of which it cannot be doubted that he always has sufficient motives. But education, we have said, should be an instrument to render the individual the best possible

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artificer of happiness, not to himself alone, but also to others. What, then, are the qualities with which he ought to be endowed, to make him produce the greatest possible quantity of happiness to others?

"It is evident enough to see what is the first grand division. A man can affect the happiness of others, either by abstaining from doing them harm, or by doing them positive good. To abstain from doing them harm receives the name of justice; to do positive good receives that of generosity. Justice and generosity, then, are the two qualities by which man is fitted to promote the happiness of his fellow-creatures. And it thus appears that the four cardinal virtues of the ancients do pretty completely include all the qualities to the possession of which it is desirable that the human mind should be trained."

Here, then, we have the independent morality of the Chinese and the morality of the old Greeks and Romans adopted by a modern European—we have these entirely coinciding. We have traced a conformity also, in many points, with the decalogue of the Jews. Harmony, practical harmony on the subject of morality, evinces itself in the most distant communications, and by the most unexpected and seemingly incongruous relations. Here we have four great streams of thought meeting in one. Those proud philosophers of ancient Greece—the men who surrounded their country with such a blaze of intellectual glory—the men whose works yet reign in our colleges, who are, in fact, still the teachers and the guides of those who aspire to the highest form of education—we have their modes of thought; we have those of the theocratic Jews, proud, too, in their way—having the Deity whom they worshiped for their national God, their local authority, their peculiar patron, the leader of their hosts when they went out to war, who aspired to subdue the world to his dominion and worship; and those peculiar and remote Chinese, with all their singularity of thought and manners and habits; and modern Christendom, with its own views, derived and extended from whatever source;—we have these four coinciding in the great outlines of social morality. What can account for this but a natural tendency, which may almost be called an instinct? What else can explain it? No common schools, few common social arrangements,

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no common forms of government, no common worship in religion; the monarchical and the democratic—the enslaved and the free—the enlightened and the comparatively rude—those with the world's stores of knowledge at their command, and those shut out from communication with the world—nations with a state religion, and nations without a state religion—sages and prophets, men of the world and recluses—they all come to the same point—they all teach us, in the same grand outline, the social morality which binds man and man together. And what can be the explanation of this, but that it all arises from our possession of one common human heart?

And how grand is the sanction which thus arises for such moral teaching! Look at this magnificent combination of thought; look at these nations, these different races—their wide separation—with their several sets of governors, priests, philosophers, guides, and teachers—with their different habits and customs—with their unlike notions of civilisation; look at them all rendering their testimony! Is not that a testimony which weighs heavily and resistlessly upon the mind? The common theological sanctions seem to me a vulgar thing compared with this. The enunciating a precept, and telling us, "You shall go and burn in sulphurous flames to all eternity if you disobey this; and if you obey it, you shall wear white robes, wave palm-branches in your hands, and chant unceasing anthems"—this is only a gross kind of selfishness—it is only appealing to a low, instinctive fear of physical pain, or to a species of coarse and individual ambition. There is nothing in this array of motives, as it seems to me, which can operate like the general sense of mankind, enunciating with a power and solemnity beyond that of all oracles, ancient or modern, the way in which we should go if we would tread the path of the true, the good, the happy. This appeals at once to conscience—conscience in the most exalted sense of the term; not conscience as expounding a sort of external statute-law, but conscience, or consciousness, interpreting ourselves to ourselves, raising its throne in our inmost hearts, judging us by our own standard, exacting conformity to the law of our own nature, and telling us thus and thus we must do, not that we may be rich or great here—not that we may avoid suffering pain, and go to glory hereafter

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—but that we must do thus if we would be worthy in our own eyes, if we would have a conscious conformity with our own standard, and would realise any thing of our own ideal. How much better, I think, is the view of human nature thus inculcated, than that which theology gives,—that narrow, degrading—I might almost say loathsome—view, which makes it the mere creature of corruption, with its destiny misery, until there is an external interposition for its deliverance. This one view of Christianity is in disagreement with all fact and observation. It is not borne out by history, it is not borne out by observation, nor is it borne out by consciousness, that man is, as theologians describe him, a totally depraved and corrupt being. To his imperfections, indeed, but to his mingling powers, to his aspiring nature, the truthfulness of his unsophisticated conscience,—to that history and fact bear witness. The one is a narrow, unimproving scheme, that confines even the power of goodness itself to a limited and arbitrarily selected number; the other looks abroad, recognises it wherever it exists, acknowledges it cheerfully, and does it voluntary homage. The one holds to a species of word-mongering, to the use of written oral precepts, to something like grammatical discussions; whilst the other makes its appeal to great and broad principles—principles connected with our nature, and founded in our own moral being. The one view of humanity makes us despair of the future; the other gives us hope and promise for futurity. In the one we see no hope for man but by a preternatural interposition, which is continually required in order to keep him from retrograding, and to save him from plunging into all kinds of vice and ever-during misery; whilst the other beholds in our nature itself that great law of progress by which man has hitherto advanced, and by which we trust and believe he will advance eternally.

The service was concluded by singing Hymn 44.

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LECTURE III.

Moral Philosophy as illustrated by the Religious Ideas (*continued*).

January 18th, 1852.

The service was commenced by singing Hymns 3 and 8.

The Prayer.

Great Giver of light and life! Source of natural and of mental illumination! we praise thee for bestowing upon us the gift of reason, and for surrounding us with objects which call forth the exercise of our faculties, and which are adapted to train them towards the perfection of our nature! In thy light may we see light, endeavouring to realise within ourselves the presence of an almighty and eternal being,—endowed with all perfection, natural and moral! May we, in that contemplation, be changed into the same image—realise something of the ideal which we contemplate—and thus grow into the moral character of thy children, as we are thine by the gift of our physical existence! We rejoice in that universal presence, every where the source of life and consolation, in our darkest moments, —for thou art with us in all the development of our being, in the loftiest exertions we can make, in the deepest sorrows we endure,—thou art still there, educing light out of darkness, and good out of evil.

Thus may we live on our course towards that full enjoyment of knowledge, goodness, and happiness to which we trust we are destined.

Seeing the shortness of the time allotted to us, may we work while it is day, because "the night cometh when no man can work." Let us apply with all diligence to the business before us. May we endeavour to do good to ourselves in serving others; and may we endeavour, also, by enriching our own character with every quality of utility, to promote their happiness in the advancement of our own. Let us be ever faithful to the moral dictates of that nature

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with which thou hast endowed us,—obeying its guidance, and following out its tendencies, looking on towards those bright advances which we hope to make in a brighter sphere, when gifted with higher powers.

May men know more of thee; as they regard themselves as thy children, may they study to know more and more of their divine Parent and Maker, endeavouring to conform themselves with the noblest image of their conception, gradually advancing in thy likeness, and thus realising on earth something of that goodness and blessedness which we anticipate hereafter! Amen.

This was followed by singing Hymns 110 and 111.

The Lecture.

It is amongst the honourable distinctions of the present time that facilities for the pursuit of knowledge and science are multiplied beyond all precedent. Our forefathers founded and endowed universities and colleges to be the seats of profound learning and of high attainment. The present generation has provided and opened its school-doors for the poorest of the poor. We have libraries, where the world's wisdom, as expressed in books, has been diligently and most largely accumulated. They place within the reach of the student the productions of genius, of industry, of science, in all nations. We have museums where the history of art is recorded in its progress from the calm massiveness of Egypt to the mystical figures of Babylon and the perfect forms of Greece,—where not only is the history of art exhibited and its pursuit stimulated, but where that of nature is also presented to us, and, in various pages and extracts from the great and enduring "stone book," we read of the world's bygone times and of the creatures that inhabited it before man was there to call them by their names, or philosophy to arrange them in classifications. We have institutions and professors and lecturers, with all the means and appliances of their several arts: in fact, the world seems full of teachers; the gates of the temple of knowledge are set wide open, and the invitation is given unsparingly to all who will that they may come and enjoy these benefits. And yet, with all this, how many there are beyond the reach of these means, to whom

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knowledge is, not only at one entrance, but at many entrances, quite shut out,—whose lack of time, or lack of means, debars them from the use of these privileges,—the distance of whose dwelling perhaps severs them from the places where they may be best enjoyed,—who, in the midst of a world that seems provided with all that can exercise the faculties of the human mind, call forth its judgment, and store its memory, are yet obliged to restrict their own pursuits and inquiries within the narrowest bounds! They find many sciences too costly for them. They cannot furnish themselves with specimens; they cannot work experiments; they cannot go forth, with hammer in hand, to assail the rocks, and to trace their material inscriptions. They are bound up within a comparatively narrow compass; and for them this profusion of means apparently runs to waste. And yet there is no one living being that has not the materials for the study of that science which it most concerns him to acquire. It is the preëminence of moral philosophy that man bears about with him in his own brain and mind, in his own thoughts and reflections, and in his consciousness of his own faculties, the machinery and the materials of this science. He can study it without cost, without external aid. It comes to him, and invites his researches; and only requires of him to lay bare the history and the workings of his own intelligence. If the proper study of mankind be man, it is not only his best, but his highest pursuit. It is that for which means can never be lacking. It is that a stimulus to which is always at hand. It is the science of himself; and it is the art and the means of insuring his own happiness.

And what has he to do to acquire it? It is not locked up in ponderous folios. It is not obscured by the disadvantages of a foreign language. It requires no large previous attainments. Man has only to trace his own being—to see what he was, to inquire what he is—and there for him is moral philosophy. He sees its simple elements in the babe, susceptible as yet only of physical pleasure and of physical pain,—yet these soon allying themselves with associations, soon carrying even the youngest somewhat out of self,—exciting approval and disapproval,—in the first instance, it may be, merely for enjoyments given or withheld, or pain inflicted, but very soon indeed extend-

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ing beyond that, — contemplating the qualities themselves of others, and considering them in themselves, and not merely in relation to its own comfort and well-being; —extending its views yet further—making its associations more remote, and at the same time finer, more moral, more spiritual—feeling that instinctive shudder which our nature always feels at cruelty and wrong. For who is there, even the most hardened villain, that cannot, or may not, if he tries, look back to a time when he, too, shrank from the infliction of unnecessary pain on others? There is a physical provision in our natures for sympathy. The sight of suffering, until we have been hardened to it by habit, causes an involuntary and responsive emotion in our own nerves and fibres; thus beginning the first faint lessons in that school of benevolence and love in which the Creator is training us. As knowledge increases and consciousness becomes stronger, man seems to hear his own faculties crying out for culture,—asking to be exercised and strengthened, to be employed in this way and in that, according to their natures,—showing their destiny, as the wings of the bird show that it is fitted to fly through the air; and then affections arise, indicating their objects, and veneration looks up to God, and declares that there is a natural religion.

Reflection is the great means in the study of moral philosophy. It depends not on precepts; it is not to be arrived at in the tedious and technical way in which either the abstract sciences or the mechanical arts are to be studied. It requires chiefly introspection, and the moral courage to deal fairly with ourselves. And it is on this account—that moral science depends mainly on reflection—that it has not that progressive character in its history which belongs to the physical sciences. The thoughtful and reflecting man, in an early and a rude age, may see as deeply into his own heart,—may know as much of the inward springs which stimulate him,—may estimate them as justly,—may feel as truly what his own powers and nature were designed for,—may read in them those lessons of union with our fellow-creatures, of veneration for our Creator, and of aspiration towards a progressive futurity; —he may see all this as clearly, and grasp it as firmly, as the most enlightened philosopher of the most civilised time or

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country. Hence it is that we find the soundest lessons of moral philosophy taught from the earliest times. It has been said in science that, although we may be inferior to those great giants who have led the way in discovery, yet even the dwarf mounted on the giant's shoulders sees farther than the giant. It may be so, it is so, in physical science; it is not so in moral science. The first man may perceive as much as the last man; for the inspection is of himself, of his own being and nature, of his own faculties and tendencies. Hence, whether in early or in later times, those succeeded best who applied themselves to this study mainly by the agency of reflection. And even those incidents and accidents of life which seclude men from active operations, have very often proved subservient to the cultivation of an acquaintance with this most valuable knowledge. How many works of this kind have emanated from men that were doomed to an involuntary seclusion from the world! Their attention has been fixed the more earnestly upon themselves, and they have studied themselves to better purpose. The literature of prisons, in its widest extent, is full of interest, calculated to excite admiration; but the literature of prisons is eminently valuable in connection with moral philosophy. Why, in our scripture books we have prophecies of Jeremiah and epistles of Paul which were written under that constrained separation from the world which is so often inflicted as a punishment. In a later period, the work which was deemed worthy of translation by Alfred—*The Consolations of Philosophy*, by Boëthius—was the produce of several years' incarceration, ending with execution. At a more modern period, Roger Bacon, doomed to incessant harassment by the jealousy of the priests by whom he was surrounded—his great discoveries being regarded as crimes to be atoned for, or as legitimate occasions for suspicion—he, in his old age and his ten years' seclusion, could apply himself to the study of his own nature, could ascertain its progress, could trace the infirmities of age, and could write the book which he addressed to the pope, on the best means of struggling with and warding off those infirmities. That pure patriot, Sir John Elliot, one of the noblest spirits that roused themselves against regal and episcopal tyranny in the beginning of the seventeenth century,—in his long confinement in the Tower,

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indited his *Monarchy of Man*, tracing there a more important empire than that for which kings were striving in the world. William Penn produced one of his finest works while in this same condition. His *No Cross, no Crown*—a doctrine which appends itself most naturally to the worship of sorrow—remains amongst the lessons which those who have affinity with his general opinions will long read with interest and with profit. And it was in Bedford Gaol that Bunyan traced the soul's pilgrimage from this world to another—that he described a course which, taken for granted the theological dogma on which he proceeded, presents a beautiful and enduring picture of mental struggle, peril, triumph, and final peace. I go not beyond subjects of this kind, or we might appeal to works of historic worth, of poetic merit, of no common order, which have originated from such seclusion—involuntary, of course, on the part of their authors; but here is enough to indicate that reflection, as the agency for acquiring moral philosophy, is a means of the most efficacious kind.

It is so because human nature is the subject. It is in human nature that we must find that philosophy, if it exists at all: and it is one indication, one striking indication, of its affinity with human nature, of its belonging to our very constitution, that in tracing the world's history, we not only meet with the virtues which the world is disposed to cherish at the time when they were most popular, but we meet with the most arduous virtues—we meet with those which might not have been expected at such times and in such circumstances—when the world had need of them. They arise by a species of moral antagonism. A moral sense belongs to man; for he has always shown it when the circumstances applied a test for that purpose. The world, indeed, has formed its own teachers. We say of Moses, of Christ, of Mahomet, and perhaps of some others, that they changed the world. So they did; but the world made them, that they might change it. They were formed under influences scattered here and there through society, and which, concentrated upon them, called forth in them such faculties and such virtues as the world had need of for its reformation. Look at a few of the periods which mark themselves off most distinctly. Take the first, the shepherd or patriarchal state. What is the virtue of that state?

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What is the disposition, the social disposition, which it most requires? Is it not that of hospitality? And we always find this esteemed and practised in the highest degree in such a state of society. On merely selfish grounds, there is no reason why the wandering shepherd should be more addicted to hospitality than the resident merchant in his mansion or palace. The fact is that he is so, and that in that state of society is needed. There was then no provision for the wanderer, no means publicly afforded by society to help him forward in his course, and give him a resting-place. Jacob, benighted, lays his head upon a stone for a pillow; but Abraham sits at the door of his tent, and is ready there to welcome any passer-by, however strange he may be, and to give him food and rest. And so it is with all the nomadic tribes that live in tents; so it is throughout the thinly peopled regions of the east to this day. Hospitality is required in such a state of society, and it is found there. The source of goodness in man, the fountain of virtue, flows on—it is perennial; but the course of the stream depends on the country through which it flows, and is modified or changed from time to time by the hills and the valleys which mark its course towards the ocean.

Take another state of society,—that of small communities. What is their virtue? What but patriotism,—by which alone they can be sustained in existence,—on the extent and zeal and fervency of which their very being depends? We speak of country as a sort of abstract term, which conveys, perhaps, not much of meaning, and excites still less of emotion in the mind; but in those little republics of Greece country was every thing. It was the soul and spirit of individual life. Every man felt himself bound by the strongest ties to the community. He owed to it whatever he possessed,—he was ready to render his life for it when required. Leonidas and his three hundred Spartans were but a specimen of what Greece could have furnished in thousands and tens of thousands. Something of this sort there was in Judæa in its earlier times. Christianity overleaped the distinctions of country and of nation. It was not adapted for this sentiment,—did not encourage it. The controversy has been raised, even, whether patriotism be or be not a Christian virtue. But, beyond controversy, it is a human virtue when humanity

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needs its exercise; and, whenever that need exists, the virtue will arise in its power and glory.

There is another state, of yet greater peril than this, which society has often had to go through,—that of subjugation,—that of tyranny and oppression,—that of a state which calls, for the sake of the many, for devotedness—perfect self-devotedness—in the few. And is there not such devotion wherever wanted? If a great country like France is trampled down, a Joan of Arc arises, with an inspiration true to her own mind, at least, which sends her forth on a mission of deliverance. If a country like Switzerland is oppressed and borne down by the insolence of feudal neighbours, there are not only those who are ready to pledge their own heart's blood to one another for her deliverance, but those who will grasp the spears of the adversary, and bury them in their own breasts to make a breach in the serried ranks, which may give an advantage to the mountaineer host. Take more recent times: when America rose in resistance against the British crown, how many there were who perilled property, honour, expectations, life itself,—all were at stake in that cause in which they fought! And, come to as recent a time as we may, Poland will have a Kosciusko, Italy will have a Mazzini, Hungary will have a Kossuth. There will always, when the trumpet sounds even for the most desperate conflict for humanity,—there will always be martyrs forthcoming, and ready to submit themselves to their destiny. Or, if we look at a contrasted virtue, there are times in human progress when, perhaps, those monarchical arrangements—which do not seem suited for the highest condition of man, or for his largest freedom—have yet their appropriate object, their work to do, in the progress of society; and then the corresponding virtue to such a state of things, which is loyalty, arises in the mind. Then, perhaps, arise doctrines such as were taught by the great minds of this country in the middle ages: then they believe, with Shakespeare, that "divinity doth hedge a king;" then they have the devotion of those cavaliers who declared that if the crown stuck on a thorn-bush, for that thorn-bush they would fight to the death. Then are men like Lord Bacon willing to sacrifice even fame,—the reputation so dear to such proud and aspiring minds,—ready to sacrifice even

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that for a time,—relying on posterity for justice, and avoiding a defence that might be made, in order to turn away the rage of a people from the minions of a sovereign. Then we find such peasantry as those who sheltered the Stuart prince, amongst whom he was hunted and hidden, with a price set upon his head which no traitor was found to claim. There is a principle, there is a spirit, of this kind, which belongs to the time when monarchy advances human civilisation, and which fades away, becomes merely nominal, and only a pretence, when that period has passed away from history.

So of a commercial condition of society, what is the virtue? Integrity. And is it not found? We talk of the frauds and tricks, the cheats and the impositions, of civilised life; and no doubt the multiplication of temptations in such a condition must have a perceptible result. But does this increase in proportion to the increase of commercial enterprise and of industrial progress? Is it greatest in those most addicted to such pursuits? We have the term "Punic faith" as to the ancient commercial country of Carthage; but we have it only from Roman enemies, Roman conquerors, and in this, probably, as in many other instances, Roman calumniators. The merchant-princes of Italy, of the Italian republics in the middle ages, what grand and truly princely men they were!—and not the less so for the influence of the commercial spirit. They were as well entitled to the meed of greatness as the warriors and statesmen of those days; indeed, not unfrequently, they themselves were foremost amongst those warriors and statesmen. And in all the complication that has grown up in our own country,—in all the temptations to crime that have been multiplied in every direction in relation to the arrangements of property,—what is the effect in those broad characters that cannot be misconstrued? Do we find it necessary to be more severe in our laws relative to debt, to bankruptcy, and to such other accompaniments of a great and complicated commercial system? No such thing. The progress, of late years, has been to mitigate them largely; and from time to time that mitigation has continued, with no such results as to induce legislators to retrace their steps. The commercial principle requires integrity, and integrity flourishes in connection with its successful enterprise.

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Then there is a state in which society is impelled forward, when great advances must be made: such a state of things as that which existed when the ancient classics were recovered for Europe,—when those stores of literature, which had been in abeyance for so many ages, became a familiar study,—when discovery was abroad on its remote voyages, and one country after another offered to recompense the daring of the adventurers,—when the Americas were found;—that age, too, when scientific knowledge began to tread a firmer path, and to accumulate its stores with greater certainty by the new inductive philosophy which was then adopted,—when inventions followed hard one upon another, and the beginnings were manifest of that rapid and brilliant and wonderful course which invention has run of late years. There was a time, there was a combination of events, which called for new modes of thought in man,—which required him to have freedom of thought as the virtue of his time,—which bade him exercise, in fresh and untried ways, the powers, "the high, capacious powers," which were folded up within him. And then arose the men that could lead forward. Then came the Luthers, the Shakespeares, the Bacons. Then came the men who could tell the world how it was to apply itself to new modes of thought,—how it was to raise the mind into a corresponding condition to that which the world was assuming by all these revivals and discoveries. And so it has been of later years. The first French Revolution, that of 1789, was not less remarkable in literature than in politics. Its effects have scarcely yet been traced as they ought to be. The bearings of that great outbreak upon European intelligence form a worthy subject for the investigation of the political historian, or of the mental and moral philosopher. Mind became more bold from that event. Creeds and institutions, heretofore held unquestionable, were subjected to strict investigation. The pretensions of past ages, however venerable for their antiquity, all went into the crucible, that the dross might be separated from the pure ore. There was a boldness of thought then generated, the effects of which we are still feeling, and which stimulated researches that, prior to that time, few indeed would have dared to make. Looking at the advance of mind,—looking at the development of this appropriate virtue of free thought in reference

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to an age of progress,—we see how many institutions still maintain their ground, but which are outwardly only husks and shells, and all within rottenness,—how these must ere long give way, and the power which has been formed by the spirit of the age shall raise the spirit of the age to its higher destinies. Even in their misshapen and crumbling remains these ancient institutions are to appearance so connected with the power which is to work upon them, that the time is approaching when, in all that thought can direct and guide, in all that thought requires, the nations of Europe will be regenerated.

I will not now further pursue this course of thought. I mentioned, in a previous discourse, that within the brief space of six lectures it would be quite absurd to attempt any thing like a general view of moral philosophy, but that all which could be done within this compass was to throw out a few miscellaneous hints and suggestions. I have endeavoured to do this; and, in the three lectures which remain, shall point out the three most important helps which man, when he goes beyond himself for assistance in his studies in moral philosophy, can acquire for his aid. I mean, first, history and biography, with their records of the lives of individuals worthy of regard, or with their broad pictures of the great events which make us see in the course of nations, upon a large scale, developments similar to those to which the individual being is destined; second, poetry, which shines, adorns, and creates,—where we see reflected the power of some mighty mind, realising other minds, and giving them, though it be but a shadowy existence, still one which teaches many important lessons; and, third, religious services, in their combination with instruction, in their tendency to call forth the best thoughts of our minds, and the best feelings of our hearts, and bringing us into the state in which moral subjects are best investigated and decided. In these three I shall endeavour to trace, in my remaining lectures, those helps which are provided for us, and of whose aid we may diligently and successfully avail ourselves in the study of moral philosophy.

The service was concluded by singing Hymn 82.

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LECTURE IV.

Moral Philosophy as illustrated by the Religious Ideas (*continued*).

January 25th, 1852.

The service was commenced by singing Hymn 19.

The Prayer.

We gratefully acknowledge that Power which rolls the planets in their spheres, and sends the seasons in due succession, by which the sun knoweth his rising and his going down, which causeth all things to proceed, as they have done, harmoniously since the creation, and which gives us the security of those enduring laws by which labour reaps its recompense, and man is encouraged to go on with his exertions, being assured that, in due season, he will "return with joy, bringing his sheaves with him."

We recognise the laws of the worlds, as well as of the material world. We acknowledge the Power which says to the thoughts of our minds and to the feelings of our hearts, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther."

We reverence that Power which restrains the waves of ocean, which, as in material combinations it enables man to work by the guidance of those laws to which nature yields obedience, from the grain of dust or the sand on the seashore, so also unfolds unto man gradually the knowledge of these laws.

Encouraged by the past, may we look onwards with hope to the future, seeing how the wise and beneficent operation of these laws has enabled man to make his advances from time to time in this knowledge, civilisation, and happiness. May we feel assured that for individuals and for nations—whatever be the clouds or darkness of their paths, however tyranny may glut itself with victims, however oppression may rage abroad, and truth and goodness be made the subjects of persecution and of punishment—still there is a God that ruleth in the earth, who

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out of evil educes good, out of darkness, light. The workings of Providence, the advances of humanity, may be for a time obscured from our contemplation, but they are still proceeding, and will bring forth their fruits of joy and peace in due time.

Let us venerate those who, in any age or in any country, have struggled against the evil, laboured and suffered in behalf of the good. May we hold them in veneration; and, as we look through the long records of humanity, may we endeavour to gain instruction from whatever it may tell us of virtue and vice, of enjoyment and misery!

Let the varied lessons of the past combine to prepare us for the future, and send us onward in our earthly course, confiding and rejoicing. Amen.

This was followed by singing Hymns 120 and 121.

The Lecture.

There are several points at which history and moral philosophy come into contact. Moral philosophy is itself the subject of history. It has records of its own; records which, if there be any justice in the views I have endeavoured to set forth, will trace it back to its fountain in human nature. Then, again, moral philosophy furnishes the means sometimes of reversing the judgments of the historian, and not seldom of correcting the alleged facts of the historian. It enables us to revise not merely the conclusions he draws, but also the very premisses from which they are deduced. And besides this, it is in the records of history that moral philosophy finds the materials for its speculations, and the guide for its practice. Other points might have been specified: a few remarks on these are all that I have to offer on the present occasion.

Moral philosophy is the subject of history. We may trace its existence; we may see it, as we see other sciences, gradually assuming greater precision and distinctness. Like other sciences, it has at first but few and simple facts on which its judgments are exercised. They become more complicated as our nature is better known; and although, for a reason I have already given, we cannot expect to find, from the nature of the case, the same progression as in the

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physical sciences—where our knowledge is continually on the increase—yet we may find that there is a greater skill, a greater power of classification, a greater facility for application to moral results, as the subjects of moral science are better understood. It is, I apprehend, in the same predicament as the other religious ideas. I have classed it as one of those ideas. Like them, it is so general that it may, in popular phrase, be termed instinctive. If not properly innate, it is so easily and promptly arrived at, that we nowhere find humanity entirely destitute of it. Like the other religious ideas, it serves as material for the systems that are framed by individuals. It enters into their composition; like them, it is sometimes obscured by men's contrivances and inventions; and like them, too, it wages a war—not always unsuccessful—with the theories and the dogmas that are put forth in its stead, and that very often tend to supersede it.

If we take this history,—first, such records as we find of it in the scriptures,—we meet there with four different efforts to give something like a form and shape to moral philosophy. First, in the ten commandments of Moses; then in the book of Proverbs; after that, in the Sermon on the Mount; and finally, in the precepts which are appended to the Epistles by St. Paul and others of the first propagators of Christianity. These may be all regarded as efforts to give moral science and moral duty something of a distinct and tangible form. This was first done in the Ten Commandments. Men's notions of morals were generally first presented to the world in the shape of law; and they had, consequently, the imperfection which attends whatever is offered to mankind as law. There was the absence of vital power; there was the prevalence, as in the Decalogue, of the negative over the positive,—of prohibition over direct precept or impulse. There is, too, in the Decalogue, the subordination—so often attempted and accomplished in those days—of the moral to the theological. It is made merely a pendant to men's notions of Deity and of Providence; and the operations of Providence are appealed to for its enforcement. The consequence of all this is, that there is not in such attempts the spirit of living law. The ten commandments are not written on the fleshly tables of the heart; they were written on tables of stone: and they

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are themselves cold and hard, like the material on which they were said to be engraved by the finger of God. They keep man back from various external offences, vices, and crimes; but they tend not to generate in his heart the spring of goodness and of truth. They only fence about his way, so as to prevent him from annoying others. The observance of the ten commandments would keep a man from being a bad neighbour or a bad member of society; it would not make him a good neighbour or a good member of society. They may keep him from being noxious to others; they will not make him true and beautiful in himself. That is the imperfection which incessantly attends this form of endeavouring to improve mankind, or to keep them from deteriorating.

The next effort was that of which we have the results in the book of Proverbs. Proverbs appeal to something more powerful than the law; they appeal to opinion. They embody the thoughts and maxims on which men are practically acting in the world. We get more of their real thoughts, more of the pith, as well as of the outer form, in such maxims and directions. But still, opinion is their origin: and they cannot rise above opinion,—the opinion, not of the enlightened few, but the opinion of the many,—the average opinion of society. This is what proverbs generally express, and all which they express. They tend to make the average man of society of that period and country, whatever it may be. Accordingly we find in the book of Proverbs a great variety. Some of them have a certain loftiness of spirit; but, for the most part, they appeal to sordid motives, or, at the best, to reputation, and the desire of a good opinion of us in the minds of others. The higher virtues have never been the effect of a proverbial philosophy. Proverbs relate only to those things which concern the great bulk of mankind in the ordinary concerns of mankind. Now and then, perhaps, by chance, some higher and wiser spirit may throw a thought into that form, and its intrinsic excellence may give it currency in the world; but this is the exception, and not the rule. Certainly it is so with the Jewish proverbs, as it is with the proverbs of all nations. They all bear the same character. They are a kind of working-day morality, wanting the sabbath repose and the sabbath ele-

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vation. Especially is this the case with those of the Bible proverbs which relate to citizenship and to government. These are of a servile spirit; they are tainted with the orientalism of the monarch or monarchs by whose directions they were collected and put together, and given to the world as one of the holy books of the ancient Jews. The finer parts are those of the introduction. In that grand personification of Wisdom,—in that sublime declaration which is put into the mouth of Wisdom, "I have strength,"—we have a strong prefigurement of the maxim common amongst us, as derived from Lord Bacon, that knowledge is power. Another great beauty in them is that appreciation of the real and homely good of life, which perhaps we might not have expected in an age of luxury like that of Solomon, and when pride and ambition were so common amongst the Jews. I allude to the beautiful and wise prayer of Agur against either poverty or riches,—the just perception there of the safest and happiest course of life; and also to those occasional recognitions of home affections, which tell us that "better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith." Sundry gems—valuable ones—are scattered up and down this multifarious collection; but they have still the defect which I ascribed to them at the outset; they are the morality of opinion, the average morality of society, and not the effort of the best, purest, highest, and wisest minds, going down into the depths of man's nature, and endeavouring to rise to the heights of man's destiny.

The Sermon on the Mount is a very different kind of contribution to this same knowledge of ourselves and of the right way; different from any thing else that we have in the Old or the New Testaments; different in many respects from any thing that we can find beyond that limit. The peculiarities of this moral discourse are very obvious and very striking. No precept is given in the form of law, in imitation of Moses. No deference is paid to the current opinion of mankind, as in the Proverbs. No theological doctrine is made the basis of a moral precept, as at the conclusion of the Epistles. None of these courses did Christ take as a moral teacher. He wrought no miracle to show that he had an authority to give moral laws. He made no declaration of a commission from the Deity to

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tell mankind that such and such things should be done, and that such other things should not be done. He appeals to no prior authority; he defies all authority; and places his own unsupported assertion against the ancients of Israel,—or, if they come into collision, against the laws of Israel. He speaks from his own consciousness, and he speaks to the consciousness of his hearers. There is the authority, there is the evidence, there is the sanction,—and there alone. Full in the face of public opinion, of a people who reckoned that riches were the evidence and the recompense of virtue, he began by declaring the poor in spirit blessed, and theirs the kingdom of heaven. Amid a pugnacious people, he solemnly declares the benediction of those who are peacemakers, and dignifies them as the children of God. Living amongst a race of inveterate bigots and persecutors, he declares his blessing, not on persecutors, but on the persecuted. He refers to the vindictive maxims of the ancients, in order to present maxims the very reverse of those which had gained their authority, and which were received as moral laws. Throughout this discourse there is every where an indication of speaking from the heart, and therefore to the heart; there is an appeal to the elemental principles within us, as the source and the test of what I have called moral philosophy. It is resolved into human nature, looking at its own tendencies and finest instincts, with reference to what is good and what is evil, not only in our actions but in our thoughts. For in this, too, the Sermon on the Mount surpasses all that had preceded it. He traces evil, not to the external action merely, or to the word, but to the innermost thoughts of the heart; and through it seeks to purify the very fountain of thought and action, to realise the true life of humanity.

After this grand exposition, this incarnation, as it were, of the genius of Christ in an unparalleled discourse, we find a sort of retrograde movement in the history of ethical disquisition or moral science. The apostles were teachers of facts and doctrine. They did not go so much to human nature as to dogma. There they found, as they apprehended, the materials for their preceptive injunctions. They are accordingly of a different class from the teachings in the Sermon on the Mount, where there is no dogma

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whatever, nor any trace of peculiarity about it. They originated a system which has continued to our day; on which an apology has been made for our most celebrated university having had till lately no professor of moral philosophy, because the moral philosophy which people need is inculcated in those deductions from doctrines which are made by preachers in their sermons, in imitation of the apostles of the New Testament. Such precepts, of course, must partake of the character of the doctrine; where it is uncertain, they will be obscure; where it is erroneous, they will be fallacious; where it is sectarian, they will be sectarian and bigoted also; where it is only transitory opinion, they will have but a transitory application. In fact, they show the phases of human thought in reference to morals, without being entitled to any such place as that which has been assigned to the Sermon on the Mount.

While such was the course of moral thought amongst the Jews, how was it amongst the Greeks? Somewhat different; for a reason which very strongly marks the superiority of that people to all the nations of the ancient world. In Greece they had no permanent priestly order. Their moral philosophy was not a mere appendage, a tag, to their mythology. From a very early period it stood alone. The priesthood in Greece was not hereditary: the priesthood did not form a peculiar and entirely different class. The gods were to be honoured with sacrifices and processions and choral songs, and there were priests to guide these observances; but those priests had been citizens, and they became citizens again. Parted for a while, for a peculiar function, from the mass of the community,—as from it they arose, so into it they merged. One happy consequence of this was, that science—and moral science as well as physical—was dissociated by the philosopher, on the one hand, from their mythology, as on the other hand even the conception of their deities was dissociated also, and left in the hands of their poets and their artists. The Grecian priests quietly immolated their victims, offered their sacrifice, and chanted their choral worship; but Homer and their bards described the persons and the passions of their gods; their artists gave them material shape in marble; and their philosophers traced the nature of man, his powers, his passions, and his duties. Had the priesthood in Greece

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possessed the same power as it did in almost all the nations of antiquity, we should never have had the Jupiter of Phidias, we should never have had the *Dialogues* of Plato. The man who gave the most precision of form, the most of substance, to moral philosophy amongst them was Socrates; and his methods show that he had penetrated to the very essence of that philosophy. It is said of Christ, that he knew what was in man; it may be said of Socrates, that he aimed at making each man detect and know what was in himself. The whole object of his questionings of his fellow-citizens was to make them see through the conventionalisms and fallacies which they had been in the habit of retailing one to another; always to lead them from words to things; to make them feel their ignorance, as he professed his own; and to stimulate them rather than to teach them, so as to make them the exposers of their own errors and fallacies, and the authors to themselves of truth,—a course which must make truth the more clear and valuable to every one in whom it is thus generated,—the true course for the successful teaching of moral philosophy. It was one which, no doubt, must make enemies. There were those who could not bear, even to themselves, to have the fallacies exploded in which their minds had revelled, and of which their minds were proud; but he spared them not. Hence the hatred of various interested classes, which at length, in its combination, sent him to his destiny,—a destiny to which he submitted on a high and grand principle. The death of Socrates was to this extent voluntary, that the means of escape were always within his reach; that escape was again and again pressed upon him; but he had formed a just notion of that integrity, of that truth, of the individual to society, which holds law in reverence, and willingly obeys its dictates. He emptied his cup of hemlock because the law had decreed it; and although he could not acknowledge the justice of the sentence, and perhaps might have disputed the wisdom of the law, yet he saw that patriotism, and, consequently, the profoundest reverence for law, was the virtue of that state of society in which he existed; and he gave an example of it by his death.

It would lead me too far, in the very brief notice which I can take in this lecture of the progress of philosophy after his time, to advert to the three great branches in

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which it appeared after his death,—to that peculiar and speculative, that mighty and in some measure mystical, character which the Socratic philosophy at once assumed in the teachings of Plato,—to that more traditionary and homely and conservative character which it took in the writings of Xenophon,—or to that more subtle and systematic form which it bears in the ethics of Aristotle. But in these forms it has descended to modern times; the ancients are still amongst us. With all that we boast of revelation, they teach in our colleges and universities, their teachings blend with those even of the great Founder of our religion. The ethics of Aristotle, perhaps, are more discussed in moral teaching at Oxford than the Sermon on the Mount. There has been the division, too, which the Greeks originated. As I showed in a former lecture, laymen, and not divines, have been the great teachers of moral philosophy in modern times. To them we owe whatever of ability has been shown in using the lights of ancient times, and following up its methods, and giving us something like a theory of morals which will bear investigation, and abide the test of the application of those first principles of human nature by which all such teaching must be tried.

How vain, then, and misplaced is the cry, so often made, about the necessity of entwining religion—by which is meant theology, theological doctrine—with all education, in order to secure the morals of the people. Why, we see by the world's history that it is likely to do no such thing. We see that all our really scientific knowledge of this subject has arisen unconnected with theological teaching. We see that whatever is most valuable, in ancient or in modern times, claims this independence. The questionings of Socrates were not theological; the Sermon on the Mount was not dogmatical; and the truest and best morality of the present day, and that which should be the object of instruction, the business of the processes of education, is not dogmatical either. There is a preparation for it in every science which can be taught, in every branch of knowledge which can be communicated, to the youthful mind. Nature is moral, as nature is religious. Knowledge and fact, and the reasoning powers and the affections properly developed, will make the child a moral being, as they make him a religious being. They will do this with-

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out the interference—they sometimes have to do it against the hostility—of those who profess to be the ministers of religion. Let such ministers, then, leave this subject, and stick to their doctrines and their ceremonies. Let them go on to waste the property, the time, the thoughts, the influence, which should be consecrated to better purposes. Let them perform their ceremonies and their mummeries; let them repeat their obscure and unintelligible dogmas, and exact the repetition of them from others. Let them affect to hold the keys of paradise, and to say who shall be admitted and who excluded. Let them train thought to walk in the little round which they have marked out for it. But let them keep themselves to their own sphere; let them confine themselves to their narrow circle, and to the moral teaching which can emanate from such a source and leave the education of the people to those tendencies which belong to the people, and to the human heart universally; which, as they lead man in worship to his God, will lead him also in kindness and love to his brethren.

Moral philosophy corrects the judgments of the historian, and not seldom the facts of the historian. For it is not every thing that comes down to us by tradition, or that has been made the theme of elaborate record, that is entitled to our full and unquestioning acceptance. Independent of the researches of the critic—and these may be and should be employed, for they may turn to good effect; they may clear away difficulties and darkness which have brooded over the page of history for ages, and make it clearer to us than to those who lived much nearer the time in question—but, independent of all that this species of criticism can do, there is a moral criticism which establishes its tribunal in every mind, and which may not merely reverse judgments in the historian, but correct his facts. I will just mention some cases in which I think this has occurred. In the whole of the Old-Testament history, continued as it was by a succession of priests,—at least, such is the general belief—I speak not now of the prophecies, or psalms, but of the historical books, those directly and professedly historical, and which, there can be no doubt, were generally the work of priests, or sacred families connected with them, and belonging to the tribe of Levi, to which the prophets, philosophers, and moralists did not generally belong,—I

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say that this Old-Testament history, the work of priests, bears marks of its origin; that it is written on a theory, in consequence of which theory the facts in it, of almost every kind, receive an external and fallacious colouring. The theory is this: The history was written to teach that in proportion as the children of Israel obeyed the law,—not the moral law exclusively, or even preëminently; the ceremonial laws were made of equal importance, perhaps greater,—but that in proportion as they obeyed these, national prosperity attended them; in proportion as they disobeyed, they were subject to national calamities. That is the theory which runs through the whole of the Old-Testament history. Now, I say that this theory is not true,—not borne out by the facts; and I say that there are facts recorded in connection with it which are utterly repugnant to the common moral impulses of the human mind.

For instance, it is in connection with this theory that the peculiar blessing of Heaven—the inheritance of the throne of Judæa—is made to depend on a particular circumstance. And what is that? Saul, their first king, called forth as king by the nation's voice, though against the wishes of the prophet Samuel, who had been practically and *de facto* their ruler,—Saul, in his military expedition against a Canaanitish tribe, takes the king or chieftain of that tribe prisoner, and him Saul fails to massacre, with the cattle and the sheep belonging to that tribe. The prophet calls him to an account for this; rebukes him sternly before the Lord; arraigns him as the violator of God's commandment; and with his own hands cruelly puts to death, hews in pieces, the royal captive, whose life the victor had spared; and he tells the monarch that for this reason the blessing of Heaven and the throne of Israel shall pass away from him,—the transfer of that blessing also involving the transfer of being the progenitor of the Messiah. Now, I say, that the passing of Heaven's blessing from one house to another,—the abolition of one, and the establishment of another dynasty,—the kind of sanction here given to a cruel and cold-blooded action, against which the feelings of men, even in that rude and savage time, had begun to revolt,—I say, that this is so offensive to whatever is moral in man, that it required all the firm adherence of a priest to his theory. and all the

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zeal of a priest to inculcate that theory, to place such a transaction in the position which it holds in the history of the Jews.

Then it is stated as a fact, that, because David set about taking a census of the people,—a harmless act, a useful act, according to the judgment of modern as well as of ancient times; and, though it might minister to the vanity of the sovereign, yet very important, in a great variety of respects, for the good of the people,—it is recorded as a matter of fact, that for this a destroying angel was sent with a celestial sword to be drawn over Jerusalem, and that thousands upon thousands of people were destroyed by a pestilence. This again, I say, stated as a fact, is as a fact incredible. As we come to a later period in the history, the discrepancy on which I have remarked becomes more glaring. Priests were busy with the reputation and with the memory of Solomon. We cannot easily get at the exact truth of the matter as to his character and conduct. He is broadly accused of idolatry. The probability is, that he tolerated idolatry; and, in so doing, dealt fairly with a portion of his subjects, whom the priests, no doubt, would have been ready to extirpate. But grant, if you will, that Solomon was idolatrous. Then, according to the theory, the Jewish nation should have been plunged in calamity, destitution should have overspread the land, the insulted majesty of Jehovah should have been avenged by swarms of invaders, and the people should have been carried into captivity, or subjected to slaughter and desolation in their homes. How stands the fact? That the reign of Solomon is the very acmè and pinnacle of Jewish glory and prosperity; that never were the borders of the land stretched so wide; that never were the riches of the people so multiplied; that never was the condition of the people so high, for either policy, arts, arms, or acquirements, as in the reign of this self-same idolater; who ought, according to the whole theory of the historians, to have drawn down upon the land the greatest vengeance of Heaven. Then, again, how does this theory correspond with the state of the Jews after the captivity,—the 400 years that elapsed between the captivity and the coming of Christ? If their national prosperity was sure to follow their adhesion to the Mosaic law, it should have come in that period in greater

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abundance than ever before; for during that period, whatever had been their previous inducements to idolatry, they renounced them. During those centuries they were most decidedly and exclusively monotheistical. They had become invulnerable to all the temptations to fall back into idolatrous worship; they were proof alike against its attractions and its threatenings; they endured even to martyrdom. We read of the woman who for this faith beheld unflinchingly her seven sons in succession put to death, and then suffered martyrdom herself. And yet, were they prosperous during those centuries? Is it a glorious time for Jewish history? The scriptural record leaves it dark and blank; but other documents supply the facts; and we know that, instead of being great and prosperous and glorious then, it was the time of their heaviest degradation; the time when the arm of power was over them, and fell heavily upon them; when they were reduced by one power after another to the condition of a tributary people; when they sank into a mere provincial existence; when their native rulers passed away; when, in the regal or the priestly form, they were mere slaves,—abject, trodden, plundered, insulted slaves. And yet this fact comes to us in connection with a theory which should have made that the season of their brightest honour and their widest prosperity. Then, I say, we are entitled to reverse the judgment of the historian; we are entitled to question many of his facts, when those facts appear to be results of this theory under which the histories were written; and that moral philosophy is a guide to the truth of history, even without arraigning it by mere critical evidence, and judging with that species of truth which belongs to what is commonly called historical criticism.

There is another theory, of a similar kind, prevailing with Christian writers as to the Jews. They tell us that the Jews are in a state of dispersion and degradation, and have been so for eighteen centuries, on account of their guilt in the crucifixion of Christ. That is the theory of most Christian history of the Jews for the last eighteen centuries. Now, will this hold together? It presupposes the fact—and some knowledge on the part of the Jews of the fact—that their national existence, their continuance as a community, were contingent on the reception of the Mes-

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siah. Well, we find that ten tribes had been dispersed some centuries before; that there were only two tribes remaining, —those of Judah and Benjamin. The others—which had constituted for a period the kingdom of Samaria—were gone; they had nothing to do with the rejection of Christ, or his crucifixion; and yet they were subjected to a heavier punishment than that which befell those who, according to this theory, are the two guilty tribes. The ten tribes were not merely dispersed, they disappeared, they vanished from history. They are, for aught that we can ascertain, annihilated, amalgamated with other races. No country knows them. One curious traveller after another fancies that he has found, in some remote oriental tribe, or in some African race, vestiges of the ten tribes of Israel; and, after a while, his theory is investigated, and proved as fallacious as many that have gone before. Those tribes are doomed and destroyed as tribes, yet they never committed the crime for which we are told the heaviest calamities were to fall upon the Jews.

Well, take the crucifixion of Christ as it stands in reference to the two remaining tribes. When we say that the Jews crucified Christ, it is by a sort of license—a very considerable license—if we mean to fix the act exclusively upon them. There is a Roman authority concerned in the matter, without the intervention of which the Jews had no power. They were Roman soldiers that guarded the cross; they were Roman soldiers that watched around the tomb. Yet the Roman empire suffers no ban for this act like that which is supposed to fall upon the Jews. But who were the Jews that were parties to it? Were they a majority of the Jewish people of that day? That fact is most questionable; or rather, that fact may, with great appearance of accuracy, be contested and denied. Because, where were the Jews then? A portion of them were in Judæa; but look at their large settlements at Alexandria, in oriental regions, and in the western portions of the Roman empire. There were more Jews out of Judæa than in Judæa at that period; and those out of Judæa surely had nothing to do with it; they could have no more guilt in the matter than our own colonists of Australia or Canada could be held responsible for a riot and murder which took place in this metropolis. Even of those in Judæa, how

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many were concerned? It was at the time of one of their great annual festivals; but it had become only a theological conventionalism that the nation was actually gathered together at Jerusalem at that time. Parties of serious and devout people went up from different towns and provinces to Jerusalem, but nothing like the entire people. The great majority of them remained at home; and it was only the then residents at Jerusalem who were concerned in this act. And how many of them? The multitude that clamoured in the halls of Pilate and Herod. A few hundreds, probably, out of many thousands; and yet, for all this, we are told that other parties and their posterity are punishable, and are punished to this day. Good heavens! what reason must that be which arraigns the modern Jew, whatever his notions of historical record, as guilty of a crime—the most atrocious of all crimes—because such a thing was perpetrated by a few hundreds of Jews, led on by the priests of that day, in Jerusalem, eighteen centuries ago! The absurdity of this would be the most striking thing about it, were it not that such theories, and such alleged facts, are still made the pleas of bigotry, of proscription, of what in its results is certainly persecution. They are still urged as reasons why men of our own times and of our own country—men partaking in the morality, the knowledge, and the civilisation of these days—are to be held unfit for the enjoyment of civil rights, such as are exercised by all the other members of the community.

I might pursue this course, and trace many instances in which moral philosophy has corrected the records of history. The life of Alfred, for instance, as it stands in our older historians, is a mere enigma,—an historical puzzle. We find him deserted by his people,—a fugitive before a Danish invader; and after this, we find his name surrounded by the brightest halo of glory that ever encircled a British sovereign. What solves the puzzle? The conjecture of the reflective man, as he reads the records, that Alfred must have begun life on a different principle to that on which he finished it; that in his early career he must have been—like most Saxon monarchs—tyrannical, severe, alienating the affections of his people; so that when the invader came, there was no strong spirit in their minds to resist and

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repel the attack. Becoming sensible of the disgrace, and acted upon by those institutions which, with wiser means and collected thoughts, he formed in his exile, they became as devoted to him eventually as at the outset they had been alienated from him. I have before referred to the story of Joan of Arc;—calumniated, the vilest crimes and conduct ascribed to her, until the observant eye detects that there are two calumniating parties, each with its motives: the English, whose vanity was wounded by her prowess in the field; the Roman priesthood, who were jealous of the supposed mission of a woman,—and at that time the innovation of women in any thing like ecclesiastical affairs had been attempted, and severely censured. These two parties accumulated whatever was bitter and odious upon her. And who saw through it? Not the historian, plodding on with his ancient records, and copying fallacy and calumny again and again, as he found them there. The poet first detected the reality and genuineness of the enthusiasm of the Maid of Orleans. The philosopher followed up the visions of the poet, and they became his speculations; and at last, genuine and authentic documents—the very records of the trial themselves—have shown that where the historian blundered, the poet and the philosopher had arrived at the truth, in spite of the blunders.

We might give many more such instances bearing this particular character; for they show history as ignorantly vilifying human nature, and the criticism which derives itself from moral philosophy as vindicating that nature, and representing it as a more pure and generous thing than such narrators have led the world to imagine. I must pass by these, however, and merely say further, that history furnishes the materials of moral philosophy. There we may often find a beaming ray of light to guide us in difficulty; there we often derive strength and nerve for needful exertion. There those who fall in a great and good cause may see how much greater it is to fall in such a cause than to succeed by compromises which are untrue to man and to his rights. There the young student, struggling with difficulties, may see to what an extent men have accumulated learning and knowledge by their unaided efforts. Look at Stone, the gardener's boy, teaching himself science after science, language after language. There those who would

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rely on genius instead of industry, may see how the greatest men, the most resplendent geniuses, have ever been the most laborious men, and may read their warning in the fate of Otway and Chatterton, and of those who, like them, have blazed for a time in the world and then perished. There those who faint under the heat and burden of labour —whether physical or intellectual—may look to those who have trodden the same arduous path before them. There the man with outworn brain may see the brave old Walter Scott, struggling hard against pecuniary difficulties, to the very last working with intensity, earnestly and continuously, to give the world an impressive picture of the powers and energies of human nature. Or they may look further back, to that splendid name in our literature, Dryden, and see him, in his eightieth year, pouring forth the sublime strains of the finest lyric in our language, and even at that time bargaining with his bookseller for verses by thousands and tens of thousands. There, in all the efforts of human might, we may look for encouragement; and if we tell the truths which are there echoed in the human ear, it may be that we shall have to utter the complaint of the Jewish prophet, "Lord, who hath believed our report?" Or, if we have a fancy to look at other religions, we see the great Arabian prophet, whose religion is now that of nearly two hundred millions of people; we see him toiling earnestly from day to day for three years, and reckoning up thirteen converts as the first-fruits of that religion which was to spread so widely over the eastern world. There are lessons there for study which appeal to the heart as well as to the mind; which act not only on the thoughts, but on the feelings; and in our hero-worship it may be well if we are not so exclusive as the great high-priest of hero-worship in our day. He shows himself to be looking to man only for the objects of that hero-worship; he finds only heroes in the world, but no heroines; as if his Cromwell and Napoleon might not be matched, even in the rule and power of government—in founding or conflicting with empires—in a long and brilliant line, from Semiramis, in the dim remoteness of antiquity, through Zenobia and her Palmyra, to the Elizabeth of our own island. There, he who delights in seeing men expose themselves to tortures and endurance for the truth, may call up one fair spirit after another that has gone through

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all, and more than all, which they endured. And even when records fail, are there not virtues which have never been the subject of history, and are unsung even by the poet? Has there not been a continuance of patient endurance, of loving ministry, of essential goodness, for all human energy and happiness, which may pass without its recognition in history, but which has its recognition in the philosophy that aims at descending into the moral depths of our nature? The brawling brook of contention in its rapid course has filled with its noise the pages of history: but there has always been a broad, a deep, a full stream of truth and goodness gliding calmly along towards the ocean of eternity. And if, in the scenes which present themselves to the recollection and to the imagination, we behold man suffering acutely, do we not behold at the same time woman sympathising fervently? and while we admire the patience, the devotion, the forgiveness of Christ in his crucifixion, even praying for his murderers, let us not fail to observe also that "Mary stands beside the cross."

The service was concluded by singing Hymn 127.

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LECTURE V.

Moral Philosophy as illustrated by the Religious Ideas (*continued*).

February 1*st*, 1852.

The service was commenced by singing Hymns 39 and 40.

The Prayer.

Reverently would we offer the homage of our worship to the Power that reigns supreme over universal being,—the God who raiseth up one, and putteth down another; in whose hands are the destinies of states and nations; who sends the ages on their missions; whose rule extends over the regions of matter and of mind; whom unconscious nature obeys in all her forms and in all her diversities; whom man equally obeys,—and mind in all its varieties, and with all its faculties;—by whom we are surrounded, from whom we derive all that we possess, on whom we rely for whatever futurity may bring. To God, the supreme ruler of all things, we render the homage of our minds and hearts, desirous in our thoughts and in our volitions to observe the dictates of his will as made known to us, who with light and steadiness of purpose rules the material world and rolls the planets in their courses.

In the varying records of human progress, in the ever-changing scenes of individual life, we trace glimpses of that beneficence which presides over all, which causes the workings of almighty power to observe the dictates of unbounded goodness. Even in the wildest irregularities of man's inventions and passions, we still find evil rendered subservient to good; we still find those great purposes obtaining which were the objects of the Creator in calling into existence life, through all its diversities,—for his purposes shall stand, and he will work all his pleasure.

Strengthened by the contemplation of the past, confiding in the wisdom of those laws by which all being is regulated,

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feeling ourselves one with that universal existence which, as it springs into being from the will of the Most High, is ever subordinate to his control,—we would look onwards with calm expectation, we would rely on the future, having confidence that the principles which have operated in the past will carry on the same work to its completion.

Thus may we be prepared to go through whatever scenes of life await us, bearing up under sorrows, enjoying pleasures, and committing ourselves to his hands who worketh all things well, upon whom we rely, that having thus kindled up the spark of intellectual and moral life, he will not suffer it to be extinguished, but will cause it to blaze more and more unto perfect day; that in wider spheres of action, we may still feel that we are his children, and may still approach to a more full enjoyment of his blessings.

To the God whose we are, in whom we live and move and have our being, to whom, by whom, and through whom are all things, be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

This was followed by singing Hymns 25 and 138.

The Lecture.

In speaking of poetry as connected with moral philosophy, I do not include the stuff which goes under that name, and which, in the ideas of many, is synonymous with what they call light reading,—light reading being the resource of unexercised faculties, by which means those on whose hands time hangs heavy contrive to get rid of it. Literature, if so it may be called, of this kind is entitled to no dignified position, to no honour or regard; and the result of it is about as valuable and intellectual as if the individual were playing either push-pin with another, or the game of patience by himself. Real poetry does not come under the description of light reading; nor is it appreciated by the idle class of human beings. It implies thought; it stimulates mental exercise; it at once gratifies and strengthens the powers which we possess; and although we put it in antithetical opposition to what is commonly described as light reading, it is not devoid of interest,—it is not barren of whatever may minister enjoyment to our mental powers,—it is

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"Not harsh and crabbèd, as dull fools suppose,
But musical as is Apollo's lute."

The functions of the poet in ancient times were of the most dignified character. He was one with the legislator, with the priest, with the prophet, with the reformer. The first great legislative name in Greece, that of Solon, is associated with laws given to the people in the form of verse. The renowned legislator of the Jews, Moses, embodied in his dying song the sanctions of the statutes which he had framed. In Greece, the name of the poet, ποιητὴς, was synonymous with that of a maker or creator; and the older poets of Greece fashioned their gods into moral deities. Homer raised the mere material agencies, the physical powers, which constituted the pantheon of Egypt and other oriental countries originally, into beings with divine forms, acting upon concerted plans, showing many of the passions and even of the infirmities of humanity. In later times the minstrel was a sacred character. In this disguise Alfred found his way into the Danish camp. The barbarian respected the bard. In those times he was no minister to the cravings of vanity, no caterer for public amusement. His office was a high and a noble one; his work was godlike; and thus was generated poetry which deserves the name, which dives into the depths of the soul, which penetrates the inmost recesses of the mind, which watches, becomes conscious of, delineates the workings of the heart, which looks abroad through universal nature, and thence derives its stores for illustration or enrichment, to which the glories of the unseen world are laid open, and which combines them with what is visible and tangible to our senses,—the prophetic spirit, prescient of the future, while preserving the grander records of the past,—arising from the same source as religion, and partaking with religion in the character of divinity. Such is poetry, in its best description, which I have associated with moral philosophy as one of the most important agencies by which the truths of that science are ascertained, set forth, and commended to human knowledge and to human obedience.

And, in fact, many of the greatest poets, certainly of those in our own language, have, not merely incidentally, but directly, been instructors in moral philosophy. It has been the object of these authors, and an object which they

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have wisely and well accomplished. What is the *Paradise Regained* of Milton, but a laying bare of the workings of the human heart under the appeals of the most powerful temptations by which it can be assailed? How beautifully has the poetic faculty in him overridden the theological, —refined even the doctrine of redemption which he entertained,—discarded that comparatively low, gross, and material conception, in which human redemption is effected by the transfer of the sin of the guilty to the innocent, and justice is satisfied with a due degree of pain and agony endured! —discarding this, what is the doctrine of redemption in the *Paradise Regained?* It is that of the struggling, the successful struggling, of the human soul; the spirit of God, so to speak, within us, striving against inducements to wander from the right path, although decked out with the most flaunting allurements. The Christ of *Paradise Regained* is no leader forth of angels to battle as in *Paradise Lost*. There is none of the material beauty of the first paradise accumulated round the scene of his endurance and of his triumph; there is no great conflict of good and evil spirits, acting as if they were not spirits at all, but mere gigantic material beings, tearing up woods and mountains by the roots as instruments of warfare; there is nothing of all this: but what is much finer, much truer, much more important and useful, much more of the character of direct instruction in moral philosophy; there is the resistance to the allurements of luxury, of pleasure, of power, political or ecclesiastical; there is the abjuration even of a mental empire over mankind for the sake of the love of truth and goodness: and in the strength of that love, the man in the wilderness resists all enticements,— triumphs in every conflict,—and then, surrounded with no honours, his brows girt with no crown of triumph, followed by no applauding multitudes, but all the trials past, all the temptations vanquished, we only read of him that

> "He unobserved
> Home to his mother's house private returned."

The *Paradise Regained* is a noble treatise of moral philosophy.

Take another poem in our language, separated indeed from the *Paradise Regained* by a wide interval in most of

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the peculiarities which mark out the poet, but yet a work of worth, of sound and sterling worth,—I mean the *Essay on Man* by Pope. This, again, in a different sense, framed on a different principle, having a different object, is, like the *Paradise Regained*, really and essentially a treatise on moral philosophy. It makes almost visible to us the long chain of being that reaches from the atom to the throne of God. It makes also visible to us universality, as well as graduated ascent, and illustrates how each individual is connected with others, until the expanding circle embraces, not only the entire human race, but the entirety of being. It shows how nicely poised and balanced are the powers of man; how his sympathies are controlled by his prudence or self-love; and how that again is checked and prevented from degenerating into gross selfishness by the sympathies and natural benevolence of his nature. It teaches us a lesson of humility, in the bounded sphere which man can occupy; and it teaches us also lessons of aspiration, in the high things to which humanity may aspire. Here, again, we have all the elements of a treatise, a philosophical treatise, on morals, one which teaches us that "the proper study of mankind is man," and which lends us most important assistance in the prosecution of that study.

Take another poem of a still different character,—higher than the last, though, considered merely in a moral point of view, it is not to be compared with the first I mentioned,—Akenside's *Pleasures of the Imagination*. There we neither have the exhibition of actual conflict with temptation, as in the *Paradise Regained*, nor have we any particular theory of man's relations with other beings, either in the expanding or in the ascending scale, as in the *Essay on Man;* but we have a faculty, one of the most important faculties of our nature, delineated through all the extent of its agency, ranging from material forms to spiritual hopes and principles, combining natural beauty with moral beauty, and exciting in us that appreciation of the beautiful which of itself tends to rise from the material and external towards the internal and the moral. I class this, therefore, with the same order of poems. It is another instance in which the poet, whilst dwelling upon the faculties of man's nature, and especially upon that faculty which has been so much misunderstood, and the importance of which has been so

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greatly underrated by many divines and philosophers, yet sees, in the light of that one faculty, the whole range of truth and beauty, as embodied in humanity, and as ascending towards the great Source of truth and beauty.

And if I may name another in this list, it would be *The Excursion* of Wordsworth, as combined with his posthumous poem, *The Prelude*. These, again, are a treatise on moral philosophy, framed on a different principle from any one of the three I have yet specified. In these, though throughout both works

> "The primal duties shine aloft like stars,
> And humbler charities that soothe and bless
> Lie scattered at the feet of man like flowers,"

yet these are treated, not so much in themselves as in their connection with the development and the exercise of the human mind and character. And I would now specially refer to the later published of these works, though the first written,—*The Prelude*,—in which the poet contemplated a magnificent work, a work which the world should not willingly let die,—a work which should not be a mere monument, but a shrine and temple to the poetic spirit which he believed was in him,—in which he investigated his own fitness and training for this high and holy purpose,—in which he endeavoured to analyse himself, to call himself to account, to ask himself if he were equal to this great undertaking; and if he were, how, by what means, by what influences and agencies, he had attained to that fitness. Now, even the growth of a vegetable is interesting. The course of the tree, from the acorn, perhaps thrown at random on the soil,—the fitness of that soil for its reception,—its first faint germinations,—its striking its little stem upward and its roots downward, the dews of heaven nourishing it,—the alternate showers and sunshine by which, with providential care, it is ministered to,—the dangers it escapes,—the strength it acquires,—its gradual putting forth its branches and leaves, until it becomes the pride of the forest,—its standing so that the tempest in its rage only roots it the more firmly,—its putting forth its leafy canopy, a shelter for humanity, while the birds of the air sing in its branches: if this be a process to watch with lively interest, how much more is the development of a great poet through all his

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course, from the time when he gazed with comparatively blank admiration on the stars of heaven, or the mountains of the scene in which he sojourned, through all the powers which nature, in its simplest and most diversified associations, has conferred upon him,—the gradual enrichment of his mind with knowledge, art, and science,—the expansion of his faculties, which, tried on subordinate tasks, become greater and far greater still, until he takes his rank amongst the laurelled, and raises for himself a monument more enduring than that of the proudest kings or mightiest conquerors! Well, this has been done for us; and I say the doing of this is another instance of direct instruction, and that each of the poems I have now named may really be considered and welcomed as a treatise on moral philosophy.

When a poet does not stand before the world directly as an instructor in moral philosophy, he does so indirectly. He cannot avoid it. It is a portion of the manifold operations of the spirit that is in him. It belongs to the work which Heaven has called him to do, by fitting him to do it. Any and every poem of worth—every living poem—is rich—incidentally, if not directly—in lessons of moral philosophy. There are those grand visions of Dante: they are least worthily regarded as mere fancy pictures of heaven and hell and purgatory. They are least of all worthily regarded as having the inmates of those several spheres assigned to them in any captious way, or under the influence of human passions, partialities, or revenges. There is the doctrine of law,—the great doctrine of morals,—taught all over those combinations of superb scenery. There each has his portion assigned, whether priest or pontiff, hero or sovereign, Christian or heathen, according to the best judgment of the poet, and by virtue of stern and unvarying law,—merciless, it may seem, but only merciless as are the agencies of nature in their obedience to law,—merciless as the destroying earthquake,—merciless as the devouring fire or tempest,—but still acting in perfect consistency with a known and recognised law.

What, again, is the *Jerusalem Delivered* of Tasso?—what but the last trumpet-note of an age of chivalry,—what but the last call to that duty, which might only be regarded as a duty by fanaticism, but which, to the thoughts and religion of many of that age, still was a sacred duty,—

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the alarm-note sounding for the powers and potentates of Europe again to lead their armies to the rescue of the "Holy Land,"—that land made holy by the exertions, the teaching, the sufferings, the death, and the resurrection of an incarnate Deity?

And if we come down to our own time, to the works of our own age, there is—whatever the poet's purpose or character—something harmonious, something elevating, something moral, in poetry,—a moral teaching in the working out of his conceptions. Look at Byron's *Childe Harold*. What is it at the outset? The morbid effusions of a most morbid mind; a dark and disgusting view of humanity and of nature; the picture of a spirit possessed by evil agencies until they are wrought into its very being, and every thing is seen through a coloured—I should rather say, a discolouring—medium. But the poet sets out on his task; he is on his pilgrimage, as well as the hero of his song; and where lies his way? Why, he comparatively soon escapes from these dark recesses, from these loathsome depths; he gains higher and firmer ground; he looks around on better and on brighter objects; and, whatever might have been the trials of his life, and whatever palliations these might seem to afford even for his views growing darker instead of brighter, still we find the misanthropy, the gloom, the morbidness of the pilgrim fading away; and as one lovely object in nature after another,—one bright association in history after another,—and one triumph of human art after another, passes before his view, his own spirit partakes of their beauty and their brightness; until at last the pilgrimage that began so unpromisingly, that was so dark and dreary in its outset, finishes with a sweetness of repose upon the shrine of nature, finishes with the murmur of the continuous anthem of the everlasting ocean resounding in our ears.

And what is the poem of Thomson, so popular in his age, — his *Seasons*, — what but one continuous though varying hymn of acknowledgment and praise to Providence? and so bearing the characteristic which the hymn should ever possess, of incidentally suggesting the true, the morally beautiful, in our relations with each other, with society, as well as with the Deity, from whom these blessings flow. It needed not, though it gracefully serves the purpose, the

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concluding "Hymn," to connect all these, and weave them into an act of devotion. They are essentially an act of devotion, and, in that character, purifying and moralising.

Take another poem, the *Paracelsus* of Robert Browning. Here again we might hesitate whether to class this with the works that teach moral philosophy only indirectly, or with those that teach it distinctly and directly. We have here the fictitious history of a real mind; we have the peculiar analysis of that mind, which, though it may not claim in all its particularities the authority which demands historical or biographical credence, yet is consistent with itself, as the working of a human mind with peculiar aspirations and in peculiar circumstances. And what is its course? The first proud ambition of the intelligent youth is to gain knowledge,—the knowledge which is power,—to gain it for the sake of that power,—to glean knowledge from all climes and all ages,—to accumulate it in his own mind, and then wield it for the benefit of his fellow-creatures, over whom, by this intellectual might and royalty, he would reign as a sovereign. The poem proceeds; and the hero discovers the mistake of supposing that he could govern and bless mankind merely by superior knowledge. He learns his first great blunder, and he abjures it. He learns that the man who would bless his fellow-creatures, and be their benefactor, must love as well as know,—that the heart is a coördinate power with the mind,—that they must be combined in him, if he would realise the aspirations of his youth. He does combine them; and he goes forth to realise these purposes. He attempts to be still the proud benefactor of his fellow-creatures, by superior knowledge and by more fervent benevolence; and he meets with disappointment, calumny, rejection, outrage,—enough to drive him back into cureless bitterness. But in this he discovers another fatal blunder in his course. It is not by proud and aspiring patronage that man is led onward, that man is benefited and blessed. You may know, you may love,—but the best friend of man must be one with him; he must have sympathies that extend themselves to those who cannot rise to his heights of knowledge or of love. He must learn to see, even in hatred itself, only the strugglings of a nature that is essentially a loving nature, and is destined eventually to love. He must bear with hatred, and preju-

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dice, and scorn, and every species of antagonism; and, instead of despising,—instead of reacting with like malignant passions,—instead of being proud of his knowledge and his love, and of himself their possessor as a persecuted being, he must so place himself in sympathy that he may be one with those even who work him the wrong; and thus, without alleging claims upon gratitude or veneration, hold on his course of aspiration, as a brother amongst brethren, and find that he raises himself and others at the same time towards their ultimate and highest destination.

This theory, taught by a modern poet for a different purpose, may be really called the theory of the great dramatist of our times. For, what is the secret of Shakespeare's art?—what the charm which he has exercised over different classes of society, over different ages, and even, through the imperfect medium of translation, over different countries and nations? What is that charm, so universal in those on whom it acts,—so universal in those imaginary characters by which it acts? What is it but this?—That he felt himself, in the way to which Paracelsus only aspired, one with humanity in all its phases. He could sympathise with it,—enter into it,—become incorporated with it, as it were, even in the most opposite developments,—metempsychosise, so to speak, with human mind of any condition,—the proudest or the humblest,—the sternest or the gentlest,—the most reflective or the most unthinking and careless. That he was thus one with humanity is the source of his power; and it is the source of many a moral lesson which might, without a stretch of the reasoning exercise, be deduced from his compositions.

Now, the reason why every poem of mark, even if not directly, is indirectly auxiliary to moral science, I take to be this: that the peculiar state of mind—in the reader as well as in the writer, in the student as well as in the author—consists not merely in that fallacious excitement, which is as apt to lead us wrong as right, but in the elevated point of view from which the world, and whatever is in it, is contemplated. The light which it sheds abroad is light from heaven, and cannot lead astray. The objects of nature,—the hills and streams, the woods and valleys, the works of human art and labour,—these are all there, in the night as well as in the day; they are there, in the densest

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fog as well as in the brightest sunshine. It is the kindling up of the light that makes the difference. Poetry is that atmosphere of light in which we behold things clothed with radiance, and by it made all the more splendid. Seen through it, the stars shine the brighter, and the colours of the flowers are all the lovelier; and the mind in that state is in harmony with the good, with the true, and with the beautiful. The mind in that state is most raised above whatever it may be liable to, at other periods, of the low, the mean, and the base. It is in a condition for the perception of truth; it is in a condition for the love of truth; it is, in fact, rendered moral by the great moral truths which fiction holds perhaps even more abundantly than actual history. And it is by this same power of imagination that what is most essential in history is realised by us, and becomes powerful over us. It is not in chronological records and long strings of dates,—it is not in the mere cold, external facts,—it is not in such unmeaning and husky words as the annalist may find best suited for him to tell his tale. When the scenes of history are touched by a gifted hand, then they start into visible and palpable existence. When thoughts and emotions are marked out,—when scenes pass before us like those in Carlyle's narrative of the French Revolution, or in some of his biographies,—it is then that history becomes a power within us; it is then that we feel all the grandeur of greatness, and all the beauty of goodness.

In this, no doubt, there is a liability to that sort of defalcation which may arise from imperfect views, or often distorted ones, in the writer,—which exercises the power to form prejudices in the mind of the reader. But it is curious and interesting to remark how nature furnishes a species of check on the aberrations of poetry from truth. I will not say that it always and infallibly operates; for who can say that, without a larger comprehension both of nature and of the workings of human character than is generally possessed? But, in very many instances, nature evidently exercises a controlling power; and when the poet, though seemingly adorned in his singing robes, and exercising his imagination in the full extent of its vigour and creative influence,—even then, if he attempts a false philosophy, nature often breaks down with him, and will not consent to be the minister of erroneous teaching. To give an instance or two of this: one

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of our poets, and one well entitled to the popularity he enjoys, —I mean Goldsmith,—has, I think, grossly departed from the truths of history and of political economy in one of his metaphorically expressed opinions. Endeavouring to show the advantage of an agricultural state of society over a commercial one, he says:

> "Trade's proud empire hastes to swift decay,
> As ocean sweeps the laboured mole away;
> While self-dependent power can time defy,
> As rocks resist the billows and the sky."

Well, and how is the metaphor borne out? Are our moles —our breakwaters, the artificial securities of our harbours —less firm, less substantial, less enduring, than the very rocks and cliffs themselves by which they may be surrounded? Let some tremendous tempest sweep away the "laboured mole," and the commercial spirit, the industry, the energy that reared it, very soon repair the loss, soon again challenge winds and waves to the battle, and show that they can be resisted, perseveringly and successfully resisted. And do rocks indeed "resist the billows and the sky"? Ever and anon does not the worn cliff come tumbling down? Is it not worn away by the ceaseless though gentle action of the dews and rains that fall upon it? Does not the art of man, that power which the poet derides, triumph over all these? Does he not lower the summit of those proud cliffs which seem the pillars of our isle? Does he not thrust them down by the power which he wields, and make of them a low and level beach? Does he not penetrate through them for his own quicker progress? Does he not cut down through their aspiring summits, and there fashion his way; while, in the triumph of man over the powers of nature, his chariot of fire rolls triumphantly on its course, scorning alike what winds or waves, cliffs or rocks, may produce to obstruct or to compete with the course that human knowledge accomplishes? No; the poet is not borne out: the simile breaks down with him. It tells another tale. Rocks and railways, cliffs and moles, —they preach the laws of political economy, and they show the poet that, in his ignorance of them, he sacrifices to a mere fancy, or to the supposed predominance of a class, the truth which nature and history alike record. "Trade's proud empire" no more hastes to decay than what he called

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the "self-supporting power" of agricultural and feudal countries. These have been the decaying nations; whilst trading nations have held on their course, and realised a more enduring greatness.

Take another instance: Pope, whom I have quoted with deserved praise, I think receded from the higher ground of his *Essay on Man* in the hymn at its conclusion, when he thus appeals to the Deity:

> "Thou Great First Cause, least understood,
> Who all my sense confined
> To know but this, that thou art good,
> And that myself am blind;
>
> "Yet gave me, in this dark estate,
> To see the good from ill;
> And, binding nature fast in fate,
> Left free the human will."

Here, I say, is an incongruity which the metaphor shows as well as the philosophy. Binding nature fast in fate,—leaving the will free. How can we realise that in the conception? All the powers and agencies and elements around us are subject to changeless law. Suppose one man only in being,—in an island, if you will, or in the world,—and surrounded by nature thus "bound fast in fate:" what is his freedom, or what is he? He is not free to the extent even of the *physique* of his own body, nor as to the elements, powers, and agencies around him,—he can do nothing; he is only the image of a paralytic,—a helpless, moveless paralytic, verging fast to his dissolution, because existence in such a state is incapable of prolongation. Nature is not bound fast in fate in any other sense than the human will is fast bound in fate also; that is to say, the one and the other are subject to law,—to universal law,—divine law,—law operating not in external constraint, but in the nature of the object by which it is obeyed,—the law by which the plant grows,—the law by which the world revolves,—the law by which humanity attains its maturity,—the law by which thought and feeling, and passion and action, are all regulated, as much as the movements of that unconscious matter which obeys the law of gravitation.

Although not in a poetical composition, yet I will take another metaphor not less illustrative. The apostle Paul,

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writing to the Corinthians on the resurrection of man, compares it to the growth of the grain from the seed deposited in the ground; and he says,—"That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die." And the object of this metaphor is to illustrate the doctrine that man must pass through death, and that the corporeal body, which thus passes through death, is after death to have its existence in another form. Nature here belies the apostle. It teaches no such doctrine, illustrates no such theory. That which thou sowest is not quickened if it die; there is an end of it. It mingles with other matter; it is gone; it can exist no more. It is by having life in it that it sprouts and germinates; it is by the continuity of life that the seed deposited in the ground springs up in the plant, and bears us fruit, and ministers to the delight of the human eye, and to the support of the human frame. Nature teaches not the annihilation and the subsequent creation of an identical existence, which is what the writer wants; but nature teaches that continuity of being, that something inextinguishable, which, though obscured for a while, and seemingly lost, is only lost and dead in seeming,—which still lives, and lives to rise to a higher sphere, and to put forth nobler beauties. This is the doctrine towards which reason leads us; and this is the doctrine which nature herself, by the breaking down of the metaphor, rebukes the writer for departing from.

One more instance of this kind, and I have done. Sir Walter Scott, after a beautiful description of the flowing of a stream, the Teviot, says:

> "Unlike the tide of human time,
> Which, though it change with ceaseless flow,
> Retains each grief, retains each crime,
> Its earliest course was doomed to know;
> And, darker as it downward bears,
> Is stained with past and present tears."

Here the poet had the grace to perceive that nature was not with him. He brings his philosophy and his metaphor together, by telling us plainly that the one is unlike the other. The tide of time is unlike the flowing of the stream, which gradually refines itself as it flows and sparkles, and becomes the more pure and bright as it becomes the more swelling and majestic in its course. That is so in the ma-

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terial world, he says, but not in the moral. With more faith in nature, he would have seen that it is the same in the moral as in the physical world. Our years as we advance are not darker and darker with past and present tears. The errors or the crimes of early life may be so obliterated,—may so give place to a better and a nobler spirit,—may pass, as we have seen in the notice I took of the pilgrimage of Childe Harold,—may pass away in their morbidness and their irregularities, and give place to a more wholesome and natural development of the human spirit. Providence has ordained that grief, however deep and bitter, should, with the lapse of years, press more lightly on the human mind. Not that loss or separation is really the less felt, but that the duties of our present condition, the efforts and even the enjoyments of this preparatory state of being, assume their real proportion in the mind, and put that mind in a state for working onward better than by vain lamentations, and finding for itself, even in the agency of time, a source of consolation.

This natural exercise of power over the mind by the lapse of time,—not a deadening, but an adjusting power, which duly proportions, and leaves the mind at liberty for the pressure of present sorrow, and also for that attention which is demanded from us as to other things,—this agency of time is one of the wise dispensations of Providence; it is worth all other consolations for us. Voltaire, in his *Essays*, has an apologue of a lady who had lost a very dear son, and whose grief was deep and bitter. A philosopher of her acquaintance came to her to minister consolation. He told her of all the celebrated ladies of ancient and modern times who had had to watch over their first-born, who had endured a loss like hers in bitterness; but this did not remove her bitterness. She felt it not the less that others had had a similar burden to bear. In a short time, it is said, the philosopher lost a daughter, whom he mourned; and then the lady came and told him of other philosophers, of sovereigns, of persons of the highest importance and renown, who had lost their daughters; and his grief was not assuaged thereby, nor his lamentation, notwithstanding his philosophy, rendered the less bitter. But Voltaire goes on to say that, some considerable while afterwards, the two mourners met together, and found

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that, although still rendering "tranquil memory to the dead," they did not grieve with that absorbing bitterness which had incapacitated them for every other thought. They endeavoured to analyse the cause of this change; and their analysis of it was ended by their combining to raise a statue to "Time the consoler." In many cases it is the only consolation of which grief admits; and one of the great errors of poetical composition, especially of the subordinate character,—one of its worst departures from the true morality of philosophy,—is, that it is prone to seek an external happy ending. In modern times, how many works adopt the ignorant, the superstitious theory of an ancient time,—that a good man must needs before he dies become a rich man,—that, like Job, if the devil plunders him of all his possessions and his family, Providence will give him somehow, sooner or later, another family and double possessions. This is not Heaven's course with earth; this is not God's way with the world. Real moral philosophy should teach us to look beyond that,—should apprise us that it is in the soul itself the highest rewards and the severest chastisements are exhibited,—there, and not around us,—not in great possessions, not in poverty, in privations, or in prisons. By failing to do this, how many works there are that have forfeited the highest character the moral philosopher could give them! How many minds perhaps have thus been led astray in early life! The great dramatic poet, to whom I have already referred, was not to be thus misled. In a superficial age, in a conventional spirit, the catastrophe of perhaps his very greatest work was altered, and the audience was dismissed with the assurance that the aged Lear, after all his sorrows, was going to repossess his throne, and to live honoured and in splendour. How much wiser, how much more penetrating, how much more deeply sinks the lesson of the poet! and when it was again brought before the public, deep as was the melancholy of that conclusion, it was recognised as the most appropriate, as the only one of which the composition would admit in the minds of those by whom it was duly appreciated.

Moral philosophy, I have said, is akin to religion, in that it is derived from the essential and universal elements of our nature. The same may be said of poetry:

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they are all the produce of the same faculties; they have the same source; they tend to the same object. By the imagination whatever is most unselfish, most heroic, is realised. What are the assurances of the divine about the heaven and the hell of his theology? Nothing, till the imagination paints them, and then just in proportion as the imagination does portray them vividly. We cannot realise the future by any other power; we realise the distant by the same power. Clarkson, in the memorable scene which he describes, after he had written his first essay on the suffering of the slaves, saw them in his mind, saw them in their toils, saw them bleeding and subject to the lash, saw them in all the unutterable misery of their lot. And in the strength of that vivid vision he went forth on his mission, his long and toilsome mission, for their emancipation. It is thus the patriot sees the future freedom of his country. It is thus the martyr sees his reward in the heaven to which he is aspiring, even amidst the flames by which his body is consumed. Imagination is the realising power by which the invisible, the distant, the future, are made present to the mind, and gain power over the mind.

In this spirit, then, let us read poetry; not as the amusement of the passing hour,—not as that which may yield a slight and evanescent gratification to the fancy,—not to while away the time,—but as that which requires earnest though not irksome thought, and which well repays the thought that it requires. By its aid, how may our minds be furnished with the most splendid picture-galleries of scenery that glows in verse with more gorgeous colours than nature herself employs! How may we have communion with characters that have never really trod this globe of earth and been clothed in mortal flesh, but to which the poet has given existence and has endowed with their various attributes! We may assemble them around us, and gaze with admiration on the loveliness of the lovely, the truth of the truthful, and the suffering of the meek. By thus studying poetry, we become companions not only with the subjects of the poet's creating power, but with the poet himself in his highest condition of mind. The power of poetical realisation may be far above our grasp; appreciation of it is what any mind is capable of, according to the extent of its faculties. That let us endeavour to exercise;

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let us be the companions of the noblest minds in their noblest states; for such are enshrined in the works of mighty poets. Let us go on our course with these as our familiar friends. Though we only sit, as it were, at their feet,—though we only endeavour to appreciate what they created,—yet the companionship is ennobling, and exalts us with them, until we may apostrophise the poet as Milton did Urania:

> "Up-led by thee,
> Into the heaven of heavens I have presum'd,
> An earthly guest, and drawn empyreal air."

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LECTURE VI.

Moral Philosophy as illustrated by the Religious Ideas (*continued*).

February 8th, 1852.

The service was commenced by singing Hymns 74 and 81.

The Prayer.

Humbly and reverently may we endeavour to realise the presence of that Spirit who fills all space, who sustains all existence, who animates all life! May we render appropriate homage to the Father of our spirits; and may simplicity and truth and reverence be the characteristic of our worship!

We adore the great, the universal, the omnipotent Lord and Maker of heaven and earth,—the supreme Ruler of all things, whose are our bodies and our spirits, and all that we possess,—to whom we are indebted for the possession of whatever we enjoy, and for the hope of whatever we anticipate. To him we would render, therefore, the profoundest reverence and adoration. We worship the Giver of all good—God, "who giveth liberally and upbraideth not." To the Father of mercies, to the God of all grace, we raise the voice of gratitude and thanksgiving. We call to mind the course of our own lives, the progress of society, the history of mankind from the earliest periods; we look around on the world, full of beauty and of goodness, and behold the accumulation of man's enjoyments and progress, and we render our praises, our fervent and grateful adorations, to unbounded Goodness.

Observing the uniform course of nature, the constant action of material, and not less of mental laws, the wisdom and power displayed in all the diversified combinations which make up the history of the phenomena of the world without and of the world within us, we cherish a firm reliance on Providence, we feel the guardian care

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which is over us, and over all mankind, over all worlds, and we trust in it with filial confidence,—we worship the Father of mankind.

May we offer homage appropriate to him who is a spirit, and who seeketh those to worship him who do so in spirit and in truth. Joining with those in all ages and countries who have sent up their praises and thanksgivings to him for his bounties, may we feel that we participate in the universal song when we call on our souls, and all that is within us, to bless the Lord,—joining with all conscious being, in all its varieties, to ascribe to his name praise and power, honour and glory, for ever. Amen.

This was followed by singing Hymns 72 and 73.

The Lecture.

Man worships. We use the fact as the naturalist does some truth relating to the organisation, the growth, or the habitudes of plants or animals, in order to arrive at a philosophical classification. It is descriptive of man, and one of his distinctions from inferior animals. Man worships—has worshiped—will worship. It is a tendency of his nature, or it is a development which is sure to follow promptly and generally from his faculties and his being. The annals of hero-worship have been rightly described as the history of the world. They are so. They show the reverence which man has given, not merely to those who were surrounded with the glory of an apotheosis, but to the priest, the sovereign, the bard, to the man of literature even; which, in short, has been drawn towards whatever suggested to man an association of power or majesty—the influences in which he recognises the Divine. Accordingly, the language is extended through a vast variety of emotions and of actions. Love is idolatry, and magistracy is worshipful. It belongs to all states of society. The new-made Indian warrior has his fetiche, just as the old Hebrew patriarch had his guardian spirit, his angel of the covenant, that accompanied him in all his wanderings, and abode where he pitched his tent. Men have worshiped in an infinite diversity of ways, still exhibiting uniformity of principle and of origin. Sometimes they have done it by throwing a few grains of incense into the fire; at other

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times by the application of that fire to the slaughtered animal; and, unhappily, in some instances, to the living human being. They have worshiped with the offering up of hecatombs of oxen, or of a pair of turtle-doves. They have expressed their adoration in song and procession and dance; or they have done it by wild cries and by cutting their flesh. The Druids raised their rude circle of unhewn stones; the Catholics of the middle ages reared their gorgeous cathedrals. Men have worshiped in all sorts of attitudes—standing, kneeling, prostrate. The Christian uncovers, and the Jew covers, his head when pronouncing the words which form the sanction of an oath. There has been worship alike in solitude and in society, in caverns and woods and in crowded cities. The Tartar worships when he turns the calabash that contains his prayers; and the pope, when under the magnificent dome of St. Peter's, with the accompaniments of choral song, surrounded by all the pride of architecture and of sculpture, amid the acclamations of voices and the roar of artillery, he prays to God for a benediction on the nations. Man worships: it belongs to his nature and his being.

And that there is utility in the practice the testimony of various classes declares. The statesman sees its usefulness. He endeavours to avail himself of it by linking religious with political authority. He gives temporal honours for supposed spiritual endowments and graces. He expends the funds of a nation upon the raising of churches and the endowment of a clergy. He imagines that in this he is promoting social order—binding together the else independent atoms that are formed into the great fabric of a community. The zealot in religion not less sees what he deems utility in worship. He looks at it as the medium, not only as it is in itself, for the expression of human feelings already formed, but as the agency of proselytism. His prayers and his praises have a view to the promotion of opinions. He discerns, as he believes, that the way to human thought is through human feeling, and the way to feeling through external expression; and that is the course which he endeavours to take. And the individual mind recognises the utility,—recognises it in seasons of danger, in seasons of sorrow,—has recourse to it for calming the mind, for steadying the thoughts, for bear-

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ing the pain and suffering, for conflicting with trial, and for pursuing to its termination our earthly course. All perceive the usefulness of worship; it is not difficult to perceive its abuses also. For abuse it is, when the statesman, by his political patronage of religion, makes it the means of checking a free and bold spirit in a nation,—when he renders it subservient to the inculcation of servile doctrines,—when he would enslave, not only the actions, but the thoughts, the principles, and the character of a people. He is rendering it then subservient to purposes which may belong to state-craft, but which do not belong to religion or to humanity. The clergyman abuses it when he links eternal terrors with the rejection of his own dogmas; when, instead of pursuing, by a calm course of thought, that one impulse which is properly the object of thought only or primarily, he brings fear to his aid; when he excites apprehensions; when he preaches that doubt is damnable. He is then misdirecting a mighty agency; showing his sense of the power, but altogether perverting the purpose for which it was bestowed. Not thus is it that truth can be, or ought to be, promoted. It is abused when it is made the substitute for good and faithful services rendered to our fellow-creatures; when the very child is taught to "say his prayers," as if there were an inherent and intrinsic merit in the act, making thus a little precocious Pharisee; or when the criminal is encouraged to think that by acts of devotion he can obliterate the foul stains that have eaten into his heart and life, and become a saint and the companion of saints hereafter. All these are perversions of one of the best and purest and most efficacious agencies in itself of the true and the good.

There is real worship when the mind in solitude holds communion with its Maker,—when wandering thoughts are called home, and the world is shut out,—when, in the language of the Psalmist, man "communes on his bed with his own heart and is still,"—when all agencies upon the senses are withdrawn,—when external interruptions are at an end,—and when the thought can fix itself intently, and the feeling go forth to that Spirit in whom we live, move, and have our being. There is real worship, not only in darkness and solitude, but in the widest and the brightest scene,—when, from some elevation, man gazes around on

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the fair fruitfulness of nature and its rich varieties,—when he sees the depth of colouring of the woods, and the bright sparkling of the streams,—when the interchange of hill and valley for many a mile gladdens his eyes, with, perhaps, the mighty ocean in the far distance; and then his heart and his thoughts rise to the author of all this beauty, and he exclaims:

> "These are thy glorious works, Parent of good!
> Almighty! thine this universal frame."

There is worship in the social expression of common wants, common feelings, common desires, when various hearts and thoughts as one are directed towards him who not only seeth in secret, but who takes cognisance also of the common, the blended, the mighty movements of human feeling. There is real worship when, by some great and spontaneous impulse, a mighty crowd renders its avowed and expressed homage to the Deity;—when a Kossuth speaks to the assembled warriors of his country, or for them, in appealing to the God who orders all things, and in whose hands are the destinies of nations;—or when such men as the Covenanters of Scotland, with their persecutors in sight, raise their voices in their solemn psalm, showing a courage to which the prospect of death is as nothing, but which elevates itself in their aspirations and operates upon the conscience with everlasting realities. There is real worship in the sternest simplicity of the old puritanical services,—in the absence of all that attracts or gratifies eye or ear,—in falling back on the power of mind, of mind alone,—and in that power raising, or endeavouring to raise, humanity to a higher communion with its Creator. And there is true worship also, when all the means and appliances of art, when all that is grand in the structure of a building, when all that is suggestive in music, painting, or sculpture, are brought to bear,—when all of human genius, however exemplified and exerted, is made to minister to religious thoughts, feelings, and associations. In all these there is real worship.

But in order for real worship in any of these ways to have those moral influences with a view to which I am now adverting to the subject, the agencies which are employed should be under certain conditions. They should

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not be alien from the habits of the people. They should have some connection with the customs of the time and of the country. They should not, by their being fetched from afar, and having lost all meaning, become gesticulation rather than worship; reducing the noblest action of the human mind to a mere mechanical expression. Now, what are some of the simplest ceremonies retained amongst us? What have our habits, what our modes of thought, in such a country as this, to do with plunging into water, or sprinkling with water, as an emblem of admission to a state of discipleship in relation to Christ? In oriental countries there were meaning, beauty, and appropriateness in the symbol, by which it spoke to the eye, by which it told the tale of what was meant. There is no such meaning now. So in the participation of wine in the Lord's Supper. Many a poor communicant never tastes wine on any other occasion whatsoever; the notion of luxury is associated with it in his mind; and is that the meaning of the observance? Why, such was the simplest food, the simplest eating and drinking, of the country in which it was established. Such was the common fare of the commonest people; and this portion of Christianity is incapable of transplantation out of the vine-growing countries into those which are not so. It belongs to countries, and to those countries only, where wine is the common drink of the people.

Ceremonies should not only be in unison with the habits and customs of the people, to have any use as expressions in worship, but they should also be reasonable in themselves; they should have meaning—something very unlike the gesticulations of some forms of religious worship, which can carry no meaning whatever to any observer, which have as little meaning as the dancing of the dervishes in the East, or the use of the oil (the chrism), and other ceremonies of the Catholic Church. They are not intelligible; they mean nothing; and have the aspect rather of conjuration than of worship. Nor should worship be behind the intelligence of the time. We should not be taught to pray against things as the greatest evils which the common sense of mankind has come to view differently, —such as the prayer against sudden death in the Liturgy. There are many kinds of prayer that literally belong to

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associations of thought which are worn out, clean gone from society,—things that we express nowhere but in what professes to be worship; where, least of all, that ought to be expressed which has become thus meaningless, or which is even denied and renounced. So, again, when worship is connected with what tends to establish unfounded claims of priestly domination: when, no sensible man believing it, those who wear the mitre pretend to receive and to give, actually, flowing from the tips of their fingers, the Divine Spirit, the Holy Ghost, the preternatural influence of the Deity; or as when the forms of worship are made subservient to sanguinary purposes,—sermons preached from the drum-head, banners consecrated, and *Te Deums* raised for some desolating and bloody victory. All these ought to be rejected at once, in order that worship may advance, as most things in the world connected with intelligence do advance, towards its full development, and in that its ample sphere of useful operation.

Yes, well would it be if worship were purified from what most will acknowledge, when plainly stated and brought home to their minds, to be abuses. Well were it if, instead of binding ourselves by old forms, we consulted the natural expression—natural to us in our time and our circumstances—of our strongest feelings and of our loftiest aspirations. Well were it that there were as much of reform in worship as with many minds there is in thought and doctrine. But I confess it is impossible to be hopeful in this matter. Those who, by connection with the State, or in other ways, have means at their command for realising the externality which would best accord with the expression of worship, are little disposed to do that, or any thing else which might militate against the lower purposes which they entertain in such patronage of religion. Those who are content unquestioningly to believe with the majority, are likely to be equally content unquestioningly to worship with the majority, and will not be very critical or scrupulous as to the form by which they do so. Those who, diverging from this broad path, think for themselves, are generally much more impressed with the intellectual and logical, than with the spiritual and emotional, character of religion. They become absorbed in the one to the neglect of the other. They underrate the worth and influence of such a correction of

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feeling and of character as must arise from the due regulation of this social expression of religious feeling; they underrate this, in being intent upon the correction—by controversial means probably—of this or that error, and the establishment of this or that truth. Hence, with those who differ from the great multitude in religion, there is—from the paucity of their number and the scantiness of their means—little power to effect reformatory changes and improvements in worship; and there is also comparatively little desire or interest in so doing. They think this portion of the services to which they come is something, perhaps, to fill up the time, to give needful rest to the lecturer who conducts them, to accommodate them in not being very regular as to the time of their attendance, so that they do but come in for that argumentative portion which is the most to their taste. They think that worship goes off very well by a not very harmonious mixture of chanting of hymns and slamming of pew-doors. They look upon it as something rather to be tolerated, than what is in itself a prominent part of the object for which they assemble themselves together. Thus, neither from the heretical portion nor from the conforming and orthodox portion of society is much to be anticipated in the way of rendering more simple, more true, more worthy of their professed purpose and their real influence, those social expressions of homage to the Great Spirit which still, in one form or another, are generally retained.

For worship is really—however much it may be abused in some cases, or underrated in others—the poetry of religion, and poetry in that highest sense of the term to which I adverted in the last lecture I delivered in this place. Worship is the poetry of religion; appealing not so much, it may be, to the logical faculties as does argumentative discourse, but appealing to other and higher faculties,—to the imagination and to the heart, and, through them, endeavouring to work out, or tending to work out, results which can never be accomplished by the mere agency of the strictly intellectual faculties of our nature. To form the whole man, more is needed than they can give; as to form the complete man in literature—whatever be the department to which he addicts himself—there must be more than the mere logical faculty, if he would persuade the

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many, or improve the many, or take worthily a high station among the ranks of those who by power of mind have gained preëminence amongst their fellow-creatures.

And to this result, what may not contribute? Genius of whatever kind;—all the poets and philosophers are ready,—those of the remotest antiquity and those of modern times,—ready, with the best expression of their minds, to become coöperators in services such as might be wished,—to officiate as the priests of humanity in its intercourse with God,—to take their station, as it were, midway, and to utter the sentences which we may presume will rise up towards the Father of spirits, as being not altogether unspiritual in their nature, and others which may sink down upon earth as almost oracular, and deserving our deepest meditation. What may not combine in this great object?—what work of beauty or of grandeur that artistry is capable of producing? Whatever acts upon us, and tends to raise and bring us into a higher position, to give us a keener eye for the true, the good, the beautiful, may be rendered subservient to the purposes of worship. Heathen, I say, as well as Christian; for it has been repeatedly noticed, and it is a striking fact, that there is a marked similarity in the devotional acts, in the sincere and fervent prayers, of all men,—modern or ancient, Christian or Mahometan, Jew or Pagan, there is a similarity in them all. Prayers may be adopted by all, with the omission of such technical forms as belong to specific modes of religion. Those prayers may be adopted in common. Those who pray not with others, pray for them. "I pray with Catholics," said the late Mr. O'Connell, "but I pray for all men." Even bigotry allows of this expansion of feeling in its acts of devotion. It has been observed how alike the prayers are of those who believe that all men will be eventually saved, and those who believe that a large portion of the human race is doomed to eternal torment. Bring them on their knees, and they pray alike. The one will pray for the salvation of all men as devoutly, as fervently—ay, and as sincerely too—as the other, who believes such to be the Divine purpose with regard to all his rational creatures. There is a power in worship to emancipate the human mind, in a great measure, from darkness,—to emancipate it, in a yet greater measure, from the bonds and fetters of sectarian notions.

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I shall conclude this lecture, and this course of lectures, by merely enumerating the main points towards which they have tended. The observations which for this and the five preceding Sundays I have offered to you, have been somewhat of a more miscellaneous character than is perhaps usual. But, in ranging from one topic to another, bound together only by their common connection with the general subject of moral philosophy, there still have been certain points, salient points, on which it is desirable that attention should permanently rest. These I will now conclude by enumerating.

First, then, it has appeared, that although subject to the want of a definite terminology—a want which it has in common with all the moral sciences—yet moral philosophy is in fact, and essentially, a science. It surmounts this difficulty, or palliates it, in a way similar to those in which the other sciences surmount or palliate the difficulty. It belongs to all topics which are in the regions of pure thought, which are not absorbed in the world of sense,—which world of sense yet must supply the language we use when treating of them. I adverted in one lecture to several of these terms, and endeavoured to show something of their progress, from their physical origin to their spiritual meaning. This difficulty must be allowed for; and making such due allowance as is generally granted on topics of this nature, the character of a science may be traced in what I have called moral philosophy.

The second point which has been prominent is,—that the elements of this science are to be studied in the human constitution. We are not to look for them in books, though professing to be sacred or inspired. We are not to have them accumulated for us by others. The most important and the most essential of the materials of moral philosophy are what every one has in himself; and "our proper knowledge is ourselves to know." Hence it is we find that some, in very early periods, in very rude and ignorant times, have sounded the depths of this science as accurately as those who have lived in periods of the greatest enlightenment. It is in the human heart that the elements and materials of moral philosophy are to be found. The faculties of the human constitution are at once its fountain and its test. And this is, in fact, conceded by many who advocate a mere

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preceptive morality; for how often do they appeal to us as to the excellence of those precepts! How often do they expatiate upon the wisdom or the goodness of this or that injunction! And what is it they do when they so expatiate? There is an implied conviction that preceptive teaching has not been the origin of moral philosophy. When they say of a certain precept, "It is excellent," they suppose that we have some means of testing that excellence; and what are those means, or where to be found, but in our own constitution, in the essential principles of human nature?

Thirdly,—I have adverted occasionally to the fact that what has been called the moral sense—that is, the perception of the difference of good and evil, and the preference of good over evil, which arise spontaneously from the faculties and tendencies of our nature—is common to humanity; it belongs not to this or that race, country, or age; it belongs to human nature. We find traces of it every where, in the barbarous as in the civilised. It is the attribute of our being; and in this view the moral sense may be regarded as one of those religious ideas which in a former course I described as the materials of all religion, the universal elements, the powers and principles on which the founders of specific religions must rest, so far as in those specific religions there was to be any thing which humanity should recognise as the true and the enduring. The moral sense is a religious idea.

A fourth point is this,—that that moral sense, like the other religious ideas, however it may be regarded as belonging to our nature, is yet, like them, developed by intelligence, becomes more just and accurate in its discriminations, becomes more lively in its preferences and stronger in its aversions, in proportion as the character generally is raised by culture. Like the other religious ideas also, it is liable to perversion; it is perverted by specific religions, when they depart from the character of religions into that of superstitions, which raise false duties, denounce false crimes, pervert the natural preference for good over evil, and associate sometimes the most atrocious acts or principles with the strictest conscientiousness. The moral sense, like the other religious ideas, is developed by intelligence; it may be perverted by superstition; and it partakes of the pro-

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gress—it is under that law of progress—which applies to all the external developments of human nature.

Fifthly,—moral philosophy has most important relations with other manifestations of the human mind—with poetry, with literature, with history, with criticism, with government, with education. The greatest work of the human mind cannot be appreciated but by its exercise. Historical judgments have often been reversed by its power, and historical errors in matters of fact have been detected by its perspicacity. The statesmen who dream of ruling a nation merely by appealing to the principles of material enjoyment and progress, will err widely. An acquaintance with the phenomena of men's moral nature is needed to direct their efforts aright. Education is imperfect without that. It should be carefully developed in the young, as that which is most precious in their being. It has its relations to almost every subject of human thought or of human interest; and while it does this, it forms also the most important guidance of individual conduct.

And, as a sixth and last point, I have endeavoured to show that moral philosophy is independent of theologies, of specific forms of religion, of particular doctrines; that it rests, in its origin, on as independent a ground, nay, on a more independent ground, than they do; that it is capable of successful conflict even with that which superstition invests with all the authority of religious sanctions; that it is capable of being promoted by really religious services, by pure devotional acts, as well as of being perverted by superstitious acts. It may be promoted, it is promoted, by genuine acts of devotion. Under their influence, and in such expressions, the mind attains to its best and purest state; and when there is a disposition to cherish the feelings and to indulge in those expressions, and at the same time a reverential regard for the great principles of moral philosophy, then is it indeed that religion becomes the stay of human nature, giving it strength when the heart would fail and shrink at the sight of opposition, giving it peace and calm when otherwise it would be plunged in distraction and turmoil, reconciling it to the endurance of much which to our limited conception may seem evil, but which is really productive of enduring good; enabling us to bear calumny, the weight of which might threaten to crush our spirits to the dust;

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sending us forward on our earthly pilgrimage in a resigned, a trusting, a confiding spirit; bestowing as much of happiness as earth can give, and feeding the hope of more perfect happiness—with higher powers and grander aspirations—hereafter; smoothing the pillow of the bed of death; and infusing into man that spirit which Christ manifested when, in the hour of his agony, he exclaimed, "Father, not my will, but thine, be done."

The service was concluded by singing Hymn 101.

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MISCELLANEOUS LECTURES.

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EXPOSITION OF THE 13TH CHAPTER OF PAUL'S 1ST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

January 14th, 1838.

I INTEND this morning, instead of the discussion of a subject, as is my more usual practice, to deliver an expository lecture on that portion of the writings of the Apostle Paul which will be found in the 13th chapter of the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians. The passage is an exceedingly familiar one to all readers of the scriptures; but it may not, perhaps, on that account be less susceptible of such elucidations and of such illustrations of its spirit as may give it to some a power which they have not before apprehended, and may associate it in the minds of all with the thoughts and principles and anticipations which we may fairly ascribe to the writer himself, and which belonged to the spirit of his composition, as it was meant to act upon Christians throughout all ages.

If we were to take the writings of the Apostle Paul, and use them in the manner in which the compositions of celebrated authors of other times and countries have been used—if we were to make a selection from them of those passages which may properly be called the beauties of such a writer—I think there are three that would present themselves to the mind as standing forth preëminently from all the rest of his productions. These three are—first, the speech delivered to the Athenians on Mars' Hill; a noble specimen of the simple grandeur of antique oratory, in which, without any of the trickery or the sophistry then so common in Greece—without any confinement to a mere exposition of the sacred books, the usual mode of reasoning among the Jews—without any of those appeals to passion and to prejudice which were so prevalent with the greatest writers that Rome produced,—we find a continuous employment of intellectual power for the purpose of impressing the minds of his hearers, such as shows the great-

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ness, both intellectual and moral, of the speaker by whom it was delivered.

The next passage that I think would be selected for such a purpose is the 14th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans; that admirable charter of religious liberty, that assertion of the right of individual minds to their own full persuasion, which seems to us little recognised by the most prominent denominations of the Christian world. He lays down boldly there the right of every individual to consecrate days, or not to consecrate them; to abstain from food according to the manner of the Jews, or to partake of it according to the practice of the Gentiles, as his own conscience might dictate, without being controlled in those convictions by any human being.

The third passage, and perhaps the most beautiful of all, and one which has commended itself yet more to general feeling than the dignified assertion of religious truth to the Athenians, or the exposition of religious liberty to the Romans, is that which I have now selected, and which is a eulogy upon the virtue of charity, which seems to partake of the glowing warmth of the subject of which it treats, and to contain in the mode, as well as in the topic of the discourse, a commendation to every human heart. But there is more than this to be observed in the passage I have mentioned. There is in it the outline of a grand delineation of character—there is, as we analyse it, an acute, a discriminating, a just delineation of the various virtues or products of the benevolent principle; and it concludes with a noble anticipation of the power which that principle should progressively exercise over future ages of the Church and of the world—over future ages of man's immortal destiny.

The 13th chapter of the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians naturally divides itself into three portions. The first, comprised in the first, second, and third verses, is a general description and praise of charity as compared with other qualities: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And

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though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." There is then in the next portion of it, extending from the third verse to the seventh, the delineation which I mentioned of the particular qualities, manifestations, or results of the principle which has thus been eulogised: such as, that it suffereth long, envieth not, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, and so on. And this analysis completed, the apostle, looking onward into the future, says that charity will never fail; that it partakes of the progressiveness of human intellect; that it shall endure, making that light which at a preceding period had been veiled in twilight or in darkness, until it should assert its supremacy over the other most prominent qualities of the human character as advancing to perfection. "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."

The effect of this description is somewhat abated by the process to which the New Testament has been subjected, and which has often mutilated and enfeebled that, as it would have mutilated and enfeebled any other book to which such a process had been applied—I mean the division into chapters and verses—a division by which the spirit of the Bible has been very much rendered subordinate to its language, and the scriptures themselves have been sacrificed for the convenience of a concordance. The delineations comprised in this chapter are most intimately and essentially connected with the last words of the preceding, and with the first words of the following; in fact, the conclusion of the chapter before it is that which gives, as it were, the key to the meaning and spirit of the whole—it is that which lets us see in it the purpose that was in the writer's mind when he advanced into the general description and this particular analysis. He was endeavouring to lower the pride of those whom he addressed in the diversities of language which they possessed—in their power either of healing, or of interpretation, or of tongues; and, turning from these in the true spirit of that religion which elevates the moral qualities into supremacy above all others —which renders subordinate to them the highest attainments of intelligence—he tells them that they rejoiced in those gifts, "and yet show I unto you a more excellent

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way;"—that way, the most excellent of all, is the cultivation of the principle of genuine benevolence.

But I suppose I need scarcely remark that "charity," here, is not to be taken in the common sense—the enfeebled and narrow sense of mere almsgiving. Charity, here, does not designate either the private sympathy or the public regulations by which the abundance of those who possess is made in some sort, either by ample measure or scanty pittance, subservient to the removal of the wants of those who are exposed to all the bitter privations of hunger and cold, sickness and wretchedness. It includes these, but much more is included also. Charity is the great principle—the pervading principle—of benevolence,—that love which we are elsewhere told is the fulfilling of the law, which is the summary of duty on earth, and the pledge and assurance of happiness in heaven. Nothing less than this would be worthy of the magnificent description which he has given of it, and in which he prefers it to speaking the language of men and of angels—the highest and loftiest strains that ever bard or orator poured forth, that ever by their eloquence charmed the listening ear, sank into the heart, inflamed the spirit, or regulated the life—that ever were educed from inspiration, either of nature or of revelation—that ever flowed in the most favoured minds, from the presiding Deity showing himself in his own work, and manifesting in man the moral presence of God who made the world. He prefers it to that profound intelligence, to that penetrating spirit, which, whether by its own energies or by supernatural aid, could detect the hidden meaning of mysteries, could develop secrets that had been concealed from the foundation of the world, and so view the present as to anticipate from it the future, and thus rise to the apprehension of Him who inhabits eternity, and to whom the past, the present, and the future are alike. He contrasts it with, prefers it to, that heroic devotion which sacrifices any extent of property to the promotion of enjoyment—which will sell all that it has, if a community can be created in which each individual shall enjoy an adequate portion of nature's good, and then, looking on, can say, "This is my work:" not like the boast of Nebuchadnezzar, "This is the great Babylon that I have builded;" but the erection of a nobler edifice than that of

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the loftiest palaces, or the proudest towers, in the minds and feelings, in the inward enjoyments and external comforts, of those who have been rescued from agonies and redeemed from vice and suffering. There is something, the writer tells us, deeper and yet loftier than all these—something more intense in its nature and more expansive in its influence—something which pervades all these as with a living spirit—something which eclipses all these by its superior brightness, and compared with which even the gift of supernal eloquence, even the profundity of all conceivable knowledge, even the heroic devotion of those who have made the most costly sacrifices, can all be said to be of little value,—and that is charity, which is benevolence, love, the source of all morality in man, the best assurance of the unrivalled excellence of the Deity.

And it seems as if there were an implied description of character in these remarks which might perhaps bear application to some whom the apostle had in view, and which, perhaps, may not have been incapable of application to many in after times. For what are these qualities but those by which the noblest men have exercised temporal, intellectual, spiritual dominion over their fellow-creatures? The orators of antiquity wielded at will the fierce democracy of the state of which they were members. The prophets of old had command of the Jews by the fervour of their expostulations, by the brightness of their promises, by the terrors of their denunciations. There have been those, from time to time, who have risen to charm the world, and too often to mislead the world for their own purposes; there have been men claiming the gift of prophecy, and leading thousands or millions in their train by predictions of futurity, which excited the desires and hopes of those whom they thus banded together, and by whom they were able to lay, like Mahomet, the foundation of a religion which should prevail over a wide extent of country, and through a long duration of ages; there have been those who, for purposes such as these, would spurn even life itself, be foremost in the conflict of peril and of danger, and even sacrifice existence for the sake of establishing that power which had become, in their minds, a dearer object than existence itself. Such a character, supposing the apostle to have imagined it, he, by implication, denounces as, notwithstanding any halo of

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seeming grandeur that may surround it, unworthy of being compared with that standard which is the measure of Christian greatness—the character of Him who sojourned with the Israelites in Judæa, and traversed its wildernesses as well as its populous cities, ever identifying himself with the common human heart, and striving for its purification and redemption; and who at length devoted himself to the world's deliverance on the cross, not to establish ecclesiastical domination, not to gain a fame that was to last for ages, but to be the herald to the world, the efficient herald, of the immortality which he taught.

From these generalities, the apostle passes into particular delineations of the qualities or manifestations of this principle: "Charity suffereth long, and is kind;" and it is kindness that gives peculiarity to its long-suffering. Almost every strong passion will suffer long. Envy will watch the objects of its dislike, the possessors of the good which it covets, from month to month, and from year to year; it will reckon over again and again, within itself, the long sum of their possessions and of their enjoyments; it will again and again review its own claims to those possessions and those enjoyments, and stimulate every baser power of nature in order to depreciate those who are exalted, and place itself upon their elevation. Revenge suffereth long: it will fix its keen and deadly eye upon its victim; it will track him from shore to shore—it has done so repeatedly—in its hot pursuit of blood, nor given over until its purpose was attained. Ambition will suffer long—will allow itself to be the tool of party, in order at last to come into possession of the leadership of that party, and make it subservient to the acquisition of office and of influence. But all these passions, in their long-suffering, are devoid of the epithet "kindness," by which the writer marks the long-suffering of charity: that is not strengthened by selfish hopes, that is not hardened by ferocious purposes, that is not stimulated in its endurance by mere earthly objects of desire; but it endures in its sympathy with others—it endures in its realisation of what they are, what they feel, what they suffer; and thus bearing with ignorance and prejudice, with perversity and with obstinacy, suffering long in its kindness, it at length achieves the triumph of good over evil. "Charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not

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behave itself unseemly." In the light of love, earthly advantages, which are objects of envy, are lightly estimated. In the light of love, arrogant assumptions, which spring from an inordinate estimate of one's own powers, are corrected, and a feeling of becoming humility and gentleness is infused into the mind, that spreads itself through the manners. There is a politeness in the world generated by artificial tastes, habits, and manners, that often becomes the ape of benevolence, but can never approach so near to the reality as to impose on the discernment of those who take the apostle's delineations for their guidance,—touching, as with the spear of Ithuriel, the resemblances represented, and making them start up in their genuine and proper forms; for there will come a time when that crust of artificial manners is broken through by passion —when some storm of selfishness or hatred arises—when the mask falls off, that unchanging mask of seeming gentleness—and you behold the stormy features of the man beneath. The gentleness of manner that arises from the principle of benevolence, from the charity which is the object of the apostle's eulogy, is liable to none of these contrivances, to none of these mistakes; it holds on its safe course, because that without is only the true index of the habitual emotions that are felt within.

"Charity seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." In this description we cannot, consistently with the spirit of the whole passage, and with the intellectual power possessed by the writer, adopt such interpretation as perhaps one or two of the expressions taken separately might be capable of. In believing all things, in the sense of being imposed upon by sophistical artifice, by plausible pretension, there is no work of charity or love; there is simply a demonstration of weakness and of folly. In hoping all things, if it be interpreted of expecting generosity, where the most inveterate selfishness has been manifested—of expecting purity, where every gross passion has evidently been dominant over the individual—there would be merely the absence of intellect, and not the presence of benevolence. It is in truth that charity rejoiceth, and not in iniquity which assumes the semblance of virtue,

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or distorts the maxims of truth, for its own purposes. It is the province and property of benevolence, of benevolence taken in the highest meaning that the word will bear,—of love, which is the fulfilling of the law of morality,—it is the province of this principle to be clear-sighted, if it be the result of intellect, to spring from a clear and just apprehension of the great general principles of morality, and from a vigorous power of applying them correctly to passing circumstances and to existing characters. It is certain that the purest benevolence tends to generate the clearest intelligence; that when the mind is well ordered and harmonised, that when the feelings are directed in proper degrees and gradations to their proper objects,—that then there is that impartiality of judgment, there is that freedom from all disturbing biasses by which the mind is clouded, that its powers are most likely to be carried into strenuous exertion, and the senses to be exercised to the discernment between good and evil.

Such are the attributes of this principle of charity, in the view of the apostle. He has directed their application to a considerable variety of the concerns of human life in this rapid analysis, and it is so constructed as to warrant our extending it to all others, and assuming that, throughout the whole diversity of human circumstances and human duty, there is a guiding principle, there is an impulsive power, in this benevolence that will be sure to build up character in its noblest proportions. He goes on to describe its power of enduring, and its continued and progressive influence. "Charity never faileth; but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." He looks round on the Christian world as it existed. He perceives in that body various and impressive creeds, which were attracting apostles towards them, and which were building up a spiritual community; but he tells them that all these things are subordinate to the moral principle of Christianity—that these powers, whatever their nature or extent, are only of a short period—that they shall vanish from the earth. And the same may be said of almost all the external forms and minis-

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trations of religion. Enshrine it in ceremonies: the time comes when these ceremonies cease to have the meaning they once had. Symbolical action, once so impressive in the East, loses its force and propriety in more western regions, and there it is fitly disused. Creeds of dogma and theological imposition, if in one age they represent the state of the human mind, and show what it is men controvert, and on what they are agreed,—in another state of human knowledge, when these principles are made more clear, pass away, to be succeeded by other formulæ and other topics of discussion. Ceremonies, having at one time meaning and power, pass into oblivion, or, if retained, are retained as a mere husk and shell, which cease to be sustained by a power within. This can never be the case with the great principle of benevolence. That is the same in all states of knowledge—that is the same whatever the ceremonies that people may adopt—that is the same in all stages of civilisation, even from the most isolated, rude, and savage condition, to the highest point that civilisation can attain. Its function is to rejoice in good, wherever we can trace good through all the regions of nature, whether rational or irrational—still to behold with delight the combinations which even the material elements and powers and laws make together with the mind and heart of man for the realisation of higher degrees of enjoyment; and brooding with complacency over all these, it imbibes from the appearance of good something of the Spirit of good, and goes forth in the power of his love to bless ourselves in blessing our fellow-creatures.

This must be the essence of religion, unchanging and eternal as God, who is the object of religion that endureth for ever. And the writer illustrates the endurance by referring to the progress of his own faculties, his knowledge, from childhood to maturity,—indicating, perhaps, also his progress from the subordinate form of the Jewish religion to the nobler manifestation of the Christian. "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know, even as also I am known." The Jewish religion compared to the Christian was as infancy or childhood

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compared to maturity; the one delighted in positive injunctions, the other gives general principles for individual application; the one was a system of outward observance and of imposed ceremonial, the other calls on those who worship God to worship him, without regard to ceremonial, in spirit and in truth; the one was exclusive, watching as it were with jealous care over the cradle of infancy, and warding off all harm that might threaten to approach it, keeping up its narrow system throughout the whole extent of that dispensation—the other is expansive and united, sending forth those by whom it was received not as a distinct race, not kept like the Jews as a peculiar people, but to feel their own identification with humanity.

The analogy seems in the apostle's mind to have gone yet further; and while it looked back on the transition of Judaism to Christianity as the growth from childhood to maturity, we are to consider such growth also as exemplified in the future destiny of humanity—in the transition from man's mortal to his eternal state. Whatever the mode of being which we may in future possess, let consciousness be retained, and from all analogy and reasonable ground of anticipation we cannot but expect that it will afford inlets so large for energy, opportunities so vast for observation, impulses for the exercise of intellect and feeling so mighty, that all the scenes, and all the events and interests and exertions, of this life, shall be in comparison but as the efforts of a child when they are lost in the efforts and struggles of maturer life.

Well, then, might he conclude his description by saying, "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." Faith or confidence is the disposition of infancy—it is the direction of the inferior towards the superior for safe and wise guidance. Hope is the individual anticipation of future good, or if it extend itself beyond this, still it decides not on the nature or character of the good which is desired or anticipated. It is charity which renders the veneration of faith, its confidence in superiority, subservient to the production of moral good, which consecrates to the same purpose the brightest visions of hope, and which absorbs both faith and hope in that love of universal being by which we feel assured that the Creator of all things must also be their Benefactor.

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I said, that this chapter connected itself with both the conclusion of the preceding and the commencement of the next; nor could the description be regarded as having arrived at its termination without the emphatic admonition which immediately ensues, of "Follow after charity." Consider the realisation of this principle and its application to all the concerns of our lives as the great object that is to be attained. Oh, well were it if those who have associated the name of religion so closely with barren and unprofitable dogma, with vain and external ceremony, with subjects which have only been productive of contention, alienation of minds and of hearts, and which have gone forth into all the disgraceful violence of persecution,—if they had realised the purity of Christian principle in such delineations as these, and had obeyed the admonition with which it concludes! To "follow after charity," is the business of the man who would establish his title of Christian disciple—who would possess in peace his spirit, and yet not in uselessness, amid all the turmoil and contention of the earth; and who would not only be hopeful of heavenly enjoyment hereafter, but would realise even here the feeling within him of that peace of God which passeth understanding.

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MORAL UNITY OF GOD.

February 18*th*, 1838.

THE moral unity of the Divine Being is the subject on which I intend to address a few brief remarks to you this morning. Much has been said about the unity of God: it has long been made the subject of extended controversy—huge volumes have been produced, hundreds upon hundreds; small tracts have been circulated by thousands and tens of thousands; the researches of diligent and learned men have been applied to the topic through many a long course of years,—and, to judge by the results, in some cases apparent throughout their lives, giving to this one idea complete possession of their faculties. It has become the watchword of a religious denomination. "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and man," has been their distinctive creed, their battle-cry in theological warfare. Associations have been formed for its promotion, and associations formed for its disproof and its destruction. Religion, to judge by the way in which the discussion has frequently been carried on, and by the tone and colour that have been given to theological and moral teaching,—religion has been thought almost to be comprised in the assertion of the triumphs of what has been called the strict and proper unity of God; and in this attention, thus stimulated and absorbed in what may be called the natural unity of the Deity—his personal unity—a much more important species of oneness, a much more impressive unity, namely, his moral unity, has been comparatively neglected and forgotten. It is this on which I would now fix your attention, suggesting it as a subject to be pursued in your own contemplations.

The two modes of unity are by no means necessarily coexistent. There have been many Trinitarians—there have been many Polytheists even—who have preserved, perhaps unconsciously, a sense of the moral unity of God in their thoughts and feelings. Distributing the Deity into persons, they have nevertheless not set up a warfare between

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his moral attributes—they have regarded him as ever wise, beneficent, and paternal; and their devotion has ascended towards him in strains which bore no sectarian stamp, but which were worthy of the intelligent and heartfelt adoption of all classes and denominations. Even with the multiplicity of supposed deities with which some have peopled heaven, there may yet have been in the mind, and I have no doubt that in many cases there actually has been in the mind, such a sense of an overruling power in the things of this world—such a reverence for this multitudinous council of deities—such an apprehension that with them goodness would find favour and recompense, and that injustice to man would be visited as transgression against the gods,—that there has been practically realised even thus a moral oneness in the government of the world which is worth far more than all the technical theories of the Divine Unity that have occupied men's thoughts; while, on the other hand, the assertion of the proper oneness of God as to his personality by no means implies consistent moral oneness of character, and has often been attended with sentiments which indicate the reverse of this. There have been those exclaiming most zealously and vigorously that God is one, who have yet set reason at war with revelation—who have put discord between the scriptures and nature—who have represented the Divine government as at one time wise, and at another time capricious; as at one time partial, and at another time extending equally over all rational beings; as at one time founded on the highest and holiest principles, and at another time as descending to technicalities, and connecting itself with the most arbitrary distinctions,—even with the most arbitrary of all, such as those of belief and disbelief,—in the application of its rewards and the infliction of its punishments. It is true there is a connection between moral unity and personal unity; the one serves in many cases as a presumption of the other, though not as an absolute demonstration. Some of the ablest critics of modern days—I mean not theological, but classical critics—have doubted the single personality of Homer. They have ascribed the poems which have been abroad in the world for so many ages under that name to a number of independent rhapsodists of ancient Greece, whose effusions, having relation to a common subject—the wars of

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the combined states of Greece with the Trojan power, and the destruction of Troy—were at length combined into one whole connected work, which has come down to our times as the *Iliad* of Homer. But even if this theory is true—even if the criticisms by which learned men are led to it are ever so well founded—there still exists in these works a moral unity, a oneness in those principles on which character is delineated, on which motive is traced, on which the mental and the moral are united in their diversified delineations, and in which the mythology of the poem is brought to bear on its natural machinery, so as to combine the whole into one of the most stupendous and impressive works the world has ever seen. And the moral unity running through this ancient and marvellous production will infallibly continue to generate in the minds of readers the notion of personal unity: and in spite of all that criticism may infer from its more technical and remote means of analysis, still the prevalent feeling will be that the oneness of moral exhibition is the result of individual moral and intellectual nature,—and "the blind old man of Scio's rocky isle" will be a reality in the imaginations of men from age to age.

Yet even in these poems, and in those which bear the most indubitable marks of a single composer, there are occasional incongruities. The critics of antiquity, with all their admiration, allowed that Homer would sometimes sleep. Perfect moral unity is rather the perfection towards which humanity is tending than the point at which, in any case, humanity has actually arrived. How, indeed, can it be otherwise, being, as our nature is, subject to all the skyey influences,—the effect on thought, the consequent effect on the *morale*, of our state of health or of sickness, of prosperity or of calamity, of the anticipation of kindness and the applause of popularity, or of the desertion of friends and the antagonism of many whom the individual may be seeking to benefit? These, and a thousand other things, though acting at first only on the merely external bodily senses, find their way into the interior being. If they cannot there reverse and change every thing which presents itself as constituting the moral universe, they may still dim or brighten its sunshine, and cast some speck or cloud on its brightest and fairest sky; and they will have their effect until man is raised above the reach of all external influences what-

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ever. Until these influences set in with a uniform current, flowing ever in the same direction, we must still expect to find incongruities, inconsistencies, which belong not to entire moral unity.

A want of moral unity, however, is not to be inferred from external action, though it be at first sight of the most incongruous description. Many instances might indeed be adduced of actions which at first would have passed upon them the most opposite sentences—of which some would be vehemently praised, others as vehemently condemned—which yet are in fact emanations, perfectly consistent emanations, from the very same moral source. What, for instance, is a more seeming incongruity than a man saying his prayers and killing his child? And yet the Jewish chieftain Jephtha, praised of the Jews in after times for his heroism and for his faith, when, in the presence of his assembled and embattled hosts, he offered his vows to the Deity under the name of Jehovah, the God of Israel, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob—when from Him who is the Lord of Hosts he supplicated, he implored triumph in the battle which was about to ensue with those who were deemed the enemies of the land—in this seemingly exalted act of devotion, he was precisely the same man as when, in the fulfilment of his absurd vow, he led his daughter to the mortal sacrifice. He was in both a blind, superstitious being, whose Deity, in fact, was no more than a mere idol—whose worship was a dark, and even, taking the whole of its character into view, a wicked homage; and to a mind penetrated by such superstition, it bore the same fruit whether it came in the hour of prayer or in the human sacrifice.

Brutus—the Brutus of the poet, I mean, rather than of the historian—was the same man in actions as dissimilar—as in saving the child's musical instrument from being broken, so sparing the child that little grief, and in the assassination of a friend. There were the same purity, simplicity, and strength of character—there was the same generous feeling—there was the same regard to good in its highest and in its lowest demonstrations, and whether it be obtained by the simplest acts or by the most formidable exertions, in taking the lute from the sleeping boy,—"If thou dost nod, thou breakest thy instrument,"—as in sending his steel to the

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heart of Cæsar for the liberation of Rome, for the destruction of tyranny, for the restoration of the ancient republic, its virtues as well as its arms, and advancing every grade of its society, as he hoped, into a new and nobler position, for the enjoyment of freedom, and the cultivation of all that dignifies humanity.

The most diversified actions, the most opposite and contradictory external appearances, may thus flow from the same source, and may be not inconsistencies with, but proofs of, a pervading moral unity, whether for good or for evil, in the individual. And it is this question of evil—it is this intermingling of what at first view appears evil as blending with good—that constitutes the great difficulty of thinking minds in relation to the Deity. Hesitating as they do to receive the doctrine of the prophet, when, in the name of the Deity, he exclaims, "The Lord maketh good and evil," and sends the light and creates the darkness, which are intermingled, strangely at first to our view, in the plan of creation,—the difficulty is not solved by the old doctrine of the two principles—of an eternal good Deity and of an eternal evil Deity at warfare with each other, and yet in their warfare most mysteriously coöperating in the creation and government of the world. The mystery is only deepened by any such hypotheses as these. In fact, the proofs of unity, of moral unity, in the world are far too strong to admit of any such solution. Still less is the difficulty solved by the anti-Christian notion of a demon, of a devil, who is almost omnipotent and almost omniscient; who is put forward as the earliest rebel against the Divine authority—as first raising the standard of rebellion against Omnipotence, and gathering angels and then men around his banner: for this, in fact, leaves the question only one point further removed than it was before,—it traces back evil from the present generation of man up to Adam; but there the perplexity comes again, and comes again as formidable as ever; and the sinfulness of this very Satan, the introduction of evil into him, is still the point to be solved, to be accounted for, and imposing not less difficulty on the inquirer than if it arose at once in the present existence and operation of moral evil in the human race. All the advance that we are capable of making towards explanation is this,—that, in the intertwining of evil and good in this state of things, we find the evil incidental,

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the good essential—the evil subordinate, the good predominant—the evil subservient to the good, but the good paramount over the evil—the evil temporary, with indications of a temporary existence and of a self-destructive tendency, the good with indications of enduring existence and of a self-perpetuating and multiplying tendency. And this is the case when we look at the frame of man, in which there are faculties and powers, mental and bodily, that sometimes occasion suffering,—for we never find pain the object for which a limb, member, or organ is framed; pleasurable sensations always seem the object, and pain the accident—the pleasure in the amount of ministration of every mental and physical faculty we possess far outweighs the sum of evil. The pain we suffer is subservient to both—it is a monition of danger—it warns away from a deceptive course into the true course of health, of goodness, and of happiness; and when it becomes to us the occasion of suffering of an intense degree, we may be assured that pain will bring its own termination—that it either leads to the employment of such modes as insure the restoration of health, or that, operating a change in the organic system of the individual, it prepares him for his removal to that abode where pain ceases to be felt, and humanity rests in peace awaiting the will of its Creator. And thus it is also in the moral world. We find superstition corrupting religion; we find oppression interfering with the arrangements, the fair and equal arrangements, of human society; we find ignorance and prejudice opposing themselves to the advancement of knowledge,—but still the whole tenor of history impresses us with the fact of man's progressiveness—it shows that the human race has ever been advancing; and whatever brilliancy may spread itself over some periods of ancient history, and over the records of some states, still, when we bear in mind the existence at that time of domestic slavery, and the subjugation of the greater portion of the inhabitants even of those very places whose fame now seems so bright and glorious in our eyes,—the subjugation, I say, of the great majority of the inhabitants to all the evils of slavery,—when we note how immensely knowledge has been diffused since that time in every direction, and throughout all the great classes of society, winging its way with a pertinacity like that of the Roman

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legion, that never recedes from the point it has gained, but is still making fresh conquests—when we reflect on the accumulations of human science, of knowledge, and of the most exalted wisdom—when we see those of one age preserved, and those of a subsequent age added to them—when the inquirer, instead of finding only here and there a teacher at whose footstool he might sit and to whose tongue he might listen with delight, beholds himself, as it were, in the great pantheon of godlike immortals, and may hear the voice of the sages and of the poets, of the teachers diversely illustrious who have arisen in the remotest ages and the remotest countries, as well as those who start up among our contemporaries, and anticipate the progress of future generations as their predecessors have anticipated ours;—in these things there are indications of advancement which cannot be obliterated by any vicissitudes like those recorded in the pages of human history, in the history of the human mind and civilisation.

When we look from nature and providence to what is more exclusively and in a technical spirit called religion, we feel that a religion of universal good must, in its own nature, be universally comprehensive; and when we look from one religion of human authority to another, we have a right to demand the preservation of this moral unity. We have an antecedent objection to all systems of theology which interfere with it; when they present to us an obvious discrepancy with the ascertained moral attributes and purposes of the Deity, they present to us their own condemnation. God, as we trace him in his works and in his providence, rewards goodness and punishes wickedness, not by arbitrary inflictions, but by natural consequences. Hence it becomes an axiomatic proposition that virtue is the means of happiness; it is its very character, it constitutes the criterion by which virtue is ascertained. Society, recognising the utility to itself of virtuous conduct, has in many cases awarded its praise. Where goodness has started forward beyond the aggregate of human opinion, where by its very worth and superiority it has forfeited this recompense, there has ever been connected with it, even under the darkest operations of the divine dispensation, an internal, self-sustaining, and self-rewarding power, which gave the individual compensation for all he lost in the minds of others,

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and which was in him as a well of water springing up to life and gladness everlasting.

I cannot expect, then, in true religion to find any thing so unlike this as a technical, arbitrary sort of government; a separation to the infinite extremes of happiness and misery of those whose characters only differ from one another by slight shades, instead of broad distinctions; a difference made on grounds that do not enter into the vitality of character, and a recompense which loses all affinity with the mental and moral condition of the individual, and is capable of being alike applied to the veteran apostle after his labours of beneficence and his attainments in excellence, and to the dying thief on the cross, turning away but in the moment of dissolution from the vices of a stained life.

The systems, the theological systems, which deal in this arbitrary way, want moral unity with the dispensations, with the judgments, of God in this world before our eyes. I find that moral unity in no such representation, but in the scripture declaration, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that also shall he reap." The God of nature and of providence is impartial; we do not find that he makes distinctions in men's happiness according to their race, their profession, or their sincere faith. The means of happiness are dealt out with a large and liberal hand, and they are dealt out without any regard whatever to the distinctions which theologians have often elevated to such immense importance. In fact, we find a moral identity, both of action and of enjoyment or of suffering, in religionists of the most different classes, who mutually consign one another to eternal punishment in a future world. What, for instance, can have a closer resemblance than must have occurred in thousands and thousands of instances between the spiritual experiences, say, of a Roman Catholic and of a Calvinistic professor? They reckon themselves at the extremes of what may bear the common name of Christianity—in fact, they deny that common name of Christianity to one another. But what is the history of that which they deem their religion? Why, the Catholic has his conversion by supernal grace, as well as the Calvinist—they both believe they undergo a divine change, wrought in them in an extraordinary manner. The Catholic places his religion in one mode of ceremonial observance, of prayer and praise, and technical devotion;

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the Calvinist places his religion in prayer and praise, and in observances which he deems sacred—and though they may be other observances, the spiritual experience is the same in both. The Calvinist confesses his sins before a Deity at whose wrath he trembles—confesses them with agony and in tears; but is relieved, and enters into the full assurance of consolation, by the application of some text to his conscience, or by a change in his own sensations: the Catholic has his remorse and deprecation in like manner, and he finds his relief, not in the voice of conscience speaking within, but in the voice of the priest without giving him absolution. Both, being benevolent men, feel strongly for their acquaintances, friends, or relatives, who do not think as they do, and believe that, in consequence of their not so thinking, they must be in danger of exclusion from God's grace here, and from heaven eternal hereafter. And thus going through a complete succession of analogous sensations, they come at last to the bed of death, when each departs in hope, relying on that which he has experienced; on that which he has read in the written word in one case, on that which is spoken by the priest, who is the living word, in the other case; and, alike in their lives, we dismiss them with a similar identity in their deaths.

Whatever there be of truth or of fallacy, whatever there be of enjoyment or of sorrow, in the lives of religionists thinking so differently from one another, the moral Deity deals impartially with them, and metes out to them an even-handed measure of good and of evil, whatever that good and evil may be, and in whatever proportion they are needed. There is no trace in his works of privileges bestowed upon opinion, of recompense attaching to credence. The best rewards are connected with the feelings which man cherishes, with the purposes which he places before himself; his happiness is exalted in proportion as it embraces the happiness of others in its scope and aim and in its own exertions. Thus and thus only is distinction made: and when, seeing God thus impartial in what passes every where before our eyes, we turn to religion, we have a right to ask of any theologian who attempts to impress his own notions on our minds, that they shall at least preserve the moral unity of divine impartiality; and that he shall not tell us of distinctions made before the world's creation, and which

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are to last to all eternity after the world's destruction—the distinctions of election and reprobation—the arbitrary differences set up before mankind, by which some are the objects of endless favour, while others are the objects of unbounded wrath. We every where see the Deity cherishing individuality—diversity; we behold no plants fashioned precisely in the same way; we see no productions of nature, animate or inanimate, bearing so entire a resemblance, but that the observant eye may note their difference: the gregarious animals, which would seem undistinguishable to a careless observer, are known; the shepherd calls his flock by names, and he can discriminate their countenances,—cases of likeness among men so great as to produce mistake are recorded among the extraordinary phenomena of the world; but even in those cases there are generally ample means of discriminating, when the individuals are brought together. We find diversity every where, we see it in all the varieties of human life and character, we see it also in the different links which bind the thoughts and feelings together in countless directions, holding our world of thought and emotion in unity, like the great material world which we inhabit, with the countless millions of atoms of which its structure is composed. We seek in vain the preservation of the consistency of moral unity in artificial systems of religion; we cannot trace the same qualities, we cannot recognise the same divine hand, we cannot adore the same celestial glory, in the plan which brings out the same prescribed rule, which casts in the same strait mould all thoughts and feelings, emotions and impulses, which levels character into bleak and barren uniformity, and prescribes for thought and action through all their boundless diversities, multiplied as they are in each successive generation, one and but one mould in which they are to be cast, or failing in which they are to be broken and destroyed for ever. And as we find nowhere in nature indications of eternal vindictiveness, or of any vindictiveness in the Deity—as we find every where, as I have just stated, that evil is incidental, is subordinate, is subservient, is self-destructive, while good bears the opposite qualities—so we cannot hesitate to reject any theological system which implies the finality of evil—which represents evil as a portion of the ultimate state of being, as enduring through an eternity of torment and of iniquity.

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There is no trace here of the character of that God who is obvious to us in the works of nature and in the ways of providence. There is a moral diversity so strong as to be demonstrative of a personal diversity; and if the one be a deity, the other must be a demon.

This moral oneness, exhibited in its absolute perfection, should be the object of our exertions, for it will raise us to the level of our best condition, as not securing unity would sink us to the level of our worst. When the mind and body are in their best and highest state—when sensations are most free from pain, and thoughts most free from disturbance—when we most vividly and intensely realise what the highest powers of our nature are, or when the happiest influences are over us, flowing from the wisdom of the dead or from the sympathy of the living, putting us in harmony with those whose qualities most strongly invite our complacency—or when in nature, in her diversified and lovely productions, in the heavens and in the earth, or in the solemn effusions of holy men, revealing the truth of the invisible and future world,—when in any of these conditions we find our own moral state at its best, its simplest, its purest and highest, be that the ground to take on which to endeavour to build up the entire unity of our own system, the oneness of our heart, and thoughts, and life, and character, that they may be thus exalted to the height of which they are susceptible, and not dragged down to the obscurer views, the baser thoughts, and lower condition, which at other times may be our state of mind. The moral unity of God, as it pervades this world, extends itself, and gives us the pledge and promise of a world to come. As the work of progression goes on here, we may reasonably anticipate that it will be continued hereafter. It is in man an imperfect progression. Nature may fulfil its revolutions—winter may succeed summer, and vegetation may suffer an alternate renewal and destruction; but in this there is no analogy with man's nature, which contains within itself the proofs of a past progression, and of the capability of a future and of endless progression. There is a oneness, there is a moral harmony and unity, only to be found in the continuance of existence which is thus constituted—in its prolongation until it realises that end which is legibly inscribed upon its constitution.

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This, therefore, we anticipate. Twice has Christ connected the oneness of the Deity with the immortal happiness of humanity. He did so when he constructed his argument for the resurrection on the recorded declaration in the Pentateuch: "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob: God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." He did so when he spoke to his disciples of his own ascension, and said: "I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." The moral unity of the plans and purposes of the Deity, which he has thus associated with that bright expectation of a natural union, coheres together logically, as well as in the imagination and feeling; and we may look forward with a cheerful and growing confidence, seeing that with the moral unity of God is so intimately blended the immortality of humanity.

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HEALTH OF MIND.

No. I.

February 25th, 1838.

"A SOUND mind in a sound body" is a phrase which has descended from age to age, from nation to nation, and from language to language. That it has done so, is a mark of truth and of expressiveness. It comprises the two great personal essentials of the well-being of human nature. By implication also it may be construed to imply the other constituents of our well-being, those which are involved in our social relations; for when, in consequence either of the interference of law, or of prejudice, or of the untoward course of events, they cease to fulfil their proper function of ministering to the enjoyment and advancement of humanity; when a man's own family and blood, or the voluntary relations which men institute, become the occasion of endurance and of suffering, of trial and of perplexity; when men's situation in society corresponds not with the impulses of their nature and with the faculties of their constitution, and, while qualified to render services of one kind, with pleasure to themselves and with benefit to others, service of a different species is exacted from them, subjecting them to pain, and depriving the world of the benefits which it should receive from their individuality; or when political relations, instead of drawing forth the powers of the several members of a state and combining them for the good of the whole, become the means of oppression and degradation, of privilege in some quarters and of proscription in others,—thus embittering life, and making it to vast numbers only a scene of long and arduous conflict;—why, in all these circumstances it will be difficult indeed for the mind to retain its proper clearness and comprehensiveness and energy; it will be difficult for the body to be preserved in its best animal condition; it will

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be well if our nature do not show marks of deterioration, and if its only source of deliverance be not in some of those convulsive efforts by which great nuisances are expelled from the world, and a better order of things is instituted in their place. For the mind and the body to be well, it is essential that man's external relations should in some considerable degree be made to answer their proper purposes.

We read that when Christ was crucified, and his side pierced by the soldier's spear, water mingled with the blood that flowed; and it has been the conjecture of some theologians, that the water which so mingled with the blood was symptomatic of a derangement of the corporeal functions,—that it was indicative of the fact that, through the arduousness of his ministry, short as it was, and the ceaseless fatigue and privations of the wandering life which he led—traversing the villages, cities, and wildernesses of Judæa by day and by night,—and from the endurance of that exquisite pain that he must have experienced in beholding the obstinate depravity of different classes of his countrymen—the gross vices of some, the disgusting hypocrisy of others;—the action of his corporeal frame had been thereby impaired, that disease had been induced, and that thus there was a departure from the standard condition of humanity, even in a case where the mind that animated the body was so wise and holy and exalted as to be generally recognised as an indwelling of the Deity.

This is not physiologically necessary, I know, to account for the fact. It is, nevertheless, a conjecture that is not without its plausibility. Sympathy was the soul of the morality which he inculcated, and of his own personal moral existence. In summing up our duty in a single maxim, teaching us to do unto others as we would they should do unto us, he made sympathy the test, the standard, of morality; he resolved into the feelings of joy with others' joy, and grief with others' grief, and gratification in others' progress, all the motive impulses which should regulate the conduct of man to man, and in obeying which he advances towards the perfection of his nature. That which he inculcated, he felt also—he himself lived in others, and especially lived to feel for those who were unconscious

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of their own degradation, and unapprehensive of the wretchedness towards which they were tending. And though happiness be the object of man's being—although to preserve a sound mind in a sound body be the highest attainment of his personal good—yet there are circumstances, bearing some analogy to those of Christ, in which a similar devotedness of self is the means of a yet higher happiness than all which the most perfect personal condition of mind and body can realise for the individual; there are public cases when, for some grand social purpose, for the deliverance of a nation from the fetters which make its institutions the source of poverty and crime, of ignorance and degradation,—there are even individual cases,—where a self-devotion, a self-sacrifice, like that of Christ, a renunciation of personal advantage, a willing endurance of sorrow, are the surest methods of attaining real worth or enduring good—a state of mind which realises a blessing of unspeakable preciousness.

Health is one, whether we refer to the body or the mind,—it is one and indivisible; it is a state to make up which all the powers must be in unison, in harmonious operation. Such are the reciprocal influences of the mind and the body, that we cannot, with perfect accuracy, separate this subject into different portions, although there may be some convenience in so considering them. And this is the case, whatever be our theory: whether the thinking power be really a spiritual, invisible, impalpable substance, united by mysterious bonds with the corporeal frame, and yet really independent of it; or whether it be the mere result of gross material organisation, consequent on the formation of the brain, which is made thus to secrete thought as the liver does bile.

The first fact that offers itself to our notice is the contingency of the health of the mind on the health of the body. One cannot but be ceaselessly affected by the other. There is an analogy between the two which might be amplified to almost any extent. As the frame may wither away, may pine and perish from limited food, and be brought down to the grave by starvation, so may the soul dwindle and perish for the want of its intellectual sustenance. Where the means of knowledge are withheld altogether, or possessed but in a scanty and niggardly

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way,—where there is little indeed, either in books, or nature, or society, to call forth the reflective faculties of the individual, and give them that whereon to ruminate,—his power of thought becomes proportionately feeble; he sinks towards the mere animal, and in society becomes worthless, except for the coarsest mechanical purposes, such as the hewing of wood and the drawing of water. And as the frame may suffer from the opposite cause of repletion, so may the mind; and very often indeed have instances been before the world of a mind so filled and overloaded with the thoughts, I would rather say with the words, of other men, that all power of individual and original thought has been overlaid with them. Many of the men most distinguished by what has been called learning have shown themselves utterly incapable of judgment, devoid of imagination in themselves, or unable to recognise its beauty and its power in others. Some of the most absurd puerilities, some of the grossest blunders, that have ever been made on literary questions, have been made by men who rank among the most learned that our country has produced.

As the frame may be stunted in its growth—may be defective, lame, halt, or blind, or partially paralysed—so may the mind have some of its functions so utterly unexercised in this or that direction, as actually to become subject to a similar incapacity, and be unable to realise some of the noblest blessings of which our faculties were intended to be the inlets. Over-stimulating or understimulating diet, that either spurs the body into fever or that sinks it in pining apathy and atrophy, have their parallels also in the mind. We find continual instances of thought driven with artificial velocity in unnatural courses; or at other times lacking that which should give it vitality and energy, which should apply a needful, a most necessary stimulus for its well-being, also pining away, becoming inert, dull, ponderous, and altogether incapable of that diversity of function, and consequent diversity of enjoyment, which is one of the characteristics of our being when best developed. We may trace the influence of bodily infirmities in some of the most distinguished writers. We may find defects spreading themselves over the operations of the mind, which, if we go back through the windings of their lives,—as the Indians track the course of a river

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until they arrive at its small, its remote, its apparently insignificant fountain,—we shall find great and broad intellectual diversities resolving themselves at last into some petty and physical peculiarity. Who of philosophical writers has analysed human nature with the clearness and power of Hobbes of Malmesbury, who laid down so many of the tenets of intellectual philosophy, new in his day, but which have since demanded universal assent from inquiring intellects? and yet, with all this knowledge, how does there run through the whole a fear of man, an apprehension of the freedom of communities of men, a strong bias towards despotism, a trembling reliance on the arm of power! Hobbes was the child of fright; he was born at the time of the great alarm occasioned by the threatened invasion of the Spanish Armada. The effect was felt upon his physical frame—it acted upon his mind, and was manifest through many a long year of calm and philosophical speculation.

So, how easy it is to trace the personal defects of Pope! Amid all the philosophy of his writings, amid all the clear, calm atmosphere of his "Essay on Man," or the comprehensive piety of his "Universal Prayer," and with all the varied mental powers which are put forth in his writings, how frequently do we come upon the irritability, the pettishness, the waspishness, which were the results of a strong feeling of his personal deformity, and of the mortification thence arising, and which made him, who in some respects could stand forth as a poet of no mean order—as the interpreter of what is poetical in nature or in literature to an admiring nation, the author of such paltry personalities as disfigure his "Dunciad."

Cowper had in his frame the seeds of dread, which cast those deep and dark shadows over his life. His gloomy theology might aggravate them; but while that theology was itself a cause of so much darkness and suffering, it was also a symptom of a previous cause. If its adoption was the occasion of so many moments of utter despondency, of fearful apprehension of everlasting torment, yet that adoption itself was the result of the previous infirmity of body which made him shrink from effort, which had driven him on one occasion to the contemplation of suicide, which had banished him from society, where, by his

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exertions, he might have won his way to fame and fortune. The counteraction, which gave his writings the highest worth they possess, was found in his healthy and wholesome love of nature—in his sympathy with all the sights and sounds that presented themselves to his senses in God's universe.

Little experience must those have had of the ills to which our corporeal being is liable, who have not marked and remarked incessantly their bearings upon the mind—who have not felt their power to produce either a listlessness from which it is difficult to raise the individual being, or a despondency which may have nothing in its darkest clouds but what one ray of reason or of sympathy might dispel, but yet which broods over the mind, which makes the individual resign himself in a state of helpless abandonment to the pressure of external sensations upon inward thought, while there may be that in him which may elevate his own spirit from earth to heaven, and give an impulse to others also in their upward and onward course. These influences are not to be regarded as of infallible and exceptional power. They may be counteracted, they may be so withstood by the strenuous agencies of a developed intelligence, as to be rendered comparatively harmless.

Physical well-being is rather the condition of health of mind than a constituent portion of it. Dr. Channing says that the union of reason and sensibility constitutes what is called health of the soul. The description may be taken as a complete one, if we construe each of these terms largely —if we make reason to include, not merely the comparing faculty of judgment, but memory also; and if we take sensibility to include imagination and action, as well as susceptibility of impression from external sources. Thus amplifying each of the words, perhaps we cannot arrive at a better definition. The lowest faculties which are implied in such an exposition have their office, and are essentially required. Memory, though its functions may seem only the lowly ones of the recording and copying scribe, is yet most material. What is man's condition, however fully developed his other powers may be, if he cannot avail himself of the discoveries, of the stores of wealth, of those who have gone before him, labouring in the world of intellect?—if he is like Crusoe on his desert island, with a great deal of ingenuity,

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and infinite pains and labour, inventing and manufacturing the commonest articles of household convenience, which the man in social life finds ready to his hand, in exchange for that which he can produce on his own part towards the comfort of society? It is not good for our powers to be employed in the continual reinvention of what has already been invented, in the new discovery of what has already been discovered, in reiterated proofs of what has already been demonstrated. Providence has linked us together in society, that one generation may rise upon the works and productions of another, that the path for the mind may be rendered more broad and easy to be traversed as we advance, and that there may still be the means of making a more ample and lofty progress, in consequence of all that has been done by those who have gone before us, and that we may apply throughout all the departments of thought and knowledge, as well as of religion, the text, "Other men have laboured, and ye have entered into their labours."

But what is memory, if it be the predominant faculty of the mind? Mere memory can never make a learned man, with learning that is worth any thing. What was the benefit to the world, or to himself, of Old Parr's faculty of enumeration—that he could tell how many times Garrick repeated the word "and" in the whole character of Richard the Third? What was the worth of the memory of the celebrated self-taught Greek scholar, a few years ago, who, after a long study of the *Iliad* of Homer, could say nothing of the lovely character of Andromache, but that her name meant "man-fighting"? We read of a librarian, who retained whatever he read, however insignificant it might seem to others—whose memory was so strong, that he undertook the task of writing a topographical local history, without consulting a single authority. The local history was produced, and all the world was in astonishment that such a work should have been produced by any man without making a reference to any books whatever; at the same time, all the world found it much more convenient to use, in preference, the labours of those who, with not a tithe of his memory, had consulted references, had exercised judgment as well as recollection, and had put together facts with regard to their relative importance and to their enduring usefulness.

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The strength of man's mind is in its judgment, in its power of analysis and of comparison, in its estimate of things and of their qualities, so as to make the idea or type within us correspond to the reality which is without us. The power of imagination is to give beauty, vitality, force to all this—to invest it with its own glory—to bring it to the feeling as well as to the mere understanding—and to furnish that ceaseless impulse by which our nature is still carried onward, and our aspiration excited after yet greater stores of knowledge, or a yet wider range of thought, and a higher state of existence. It is quite a mistake to talk of the excess of these faculties in any mind of real worth, in which the different powers have been so developed as to render it a desirable object of philosophical contemplation. Each tends to generate the other. Clear judgment, extensively, intelligently exercised, brings constantly before the individual so much to stimulate his imagination, so much to show the worth and beauty of the faculty itself, as well as the glory of its results, that it must needs spring up in such circumstances. It may be at first like a plant sown in a strange soil, but it will make its own soil, and,—like the trees, whose falling leaves enrich the earth at their feet, and give it fresh power to minister to their nutriment, to strengthen their stems, and enable them to expand their branches, and put forth a yet richer and more shadowy foliage,—so, in the mind which has exercised correctly even its logical powers, will imagination spring up, and enable it to bear yet nobler fruits.

What is often called an excess of imagination is really a want of all imagination. Extravagant fictions put together without art or method, without rhyme or reason, and never realising any picture in the mind on which it can dwell,—being, in fact, so much writing at sheer random,—these are not excess of imagination; they are only deficiencies both of that and of every other quality. And to the same class belong works put in antithesis with these—professedly logical works—whose unmeaning, dull concatenation of words claims the merit of judgment, because they are devoid of any thing else. Neither in the one is there an excess of fancy, nor in the other an excess of judgment, but a lamentable want of both. Trace the works of the great writers of our nation. In proportion as their

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powers were matured, you find each faculty growing stronger from that combination, instead of being restricted or confined; and it is in the later productions of the great dramatic bard of our nation that we find at once the strongest and most excursive play of imagination, the most tremendous outbreaks of passion, and at the same time the most clearly, carefully, and judiciously constructed outline of the great work of art which he realised.

Imagination is a faculty which most eminently is exercised in promoting the advancement of mental and moral being. It is needful that the powers of the mind should be properly exercised or developed in order to constitute perfect health; and there is perhaps as great a difficulty in keeping up this balance in the mind as politicians find in keeping up the balance of power in Europe. For a long time, the object of all political effort was to maintain the balance of power, and for this treaties after treaties were solemnly entered into, sanctified in the name of the Holy Trinity; for this wars after wars were waged; and it still constitutes the great topic of discussion in the legislatures and cabinets of Europe. But what power can prevent a nation from extending its factories, from enlarging its commerce, from multiplying its population, from better organising its armies, from building more ships for its fleets, or even, by the raising up of men of learning and genius, from acquiring mental ascendency over other European powers, by the dissemination of its literature in the languages of different countries? The balance ever requires adjustment. Perhaps, if politicians had inquired further, they might have seen that it had a tendency to adjust itself—that commercial countries do not thrive by rendering nations which are their customers poorer—that intellectual nations do not flourish and advance in civilisation by endeavouring to obstruct whatever can enlighten and lead onwards the nations whom they regard but as semi-civilised and as grossly prejudiced. The plan of Providence is more beneficent than such statesmen imagine. It has rendered mutual the advantages between nation and nation—mutual the benefits which they confer upon and among one another; and if there be a real balance of power essential to the well-being of the great family of nations, why, that balance of power will be best of

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all realised when it is most left to itself, and when the self-adjusting machinery of the advance of one nation, acting for the benefit of other nations, is kept perfectly free from all interference. So it is with the balance of the mind.

I shall defer to the next lecture the introduction of the moral principle, as that without which no health of mind, no high intellectual well-being, can be either attained or preserved. Meanwhile, I will add now, that in this case, as in many others, there is action and reaction in the influences which Providence has designed to operate for the good of our fellow-creatures—that as bodily health is subservient to mental energy, activity, usefulness, and enjoyment, so does a proper cultivation and exercise of the mind react upon the body: it in turn produces health. There is, I know, a common prejudice against it, as having a directly opposite effect; but that prejudice is fully met by the records of those who have been most distinguished by the continuous and harmonious exercise of their intellectual faculties. In the *Companion to the Almanac* for this year, published by the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, we find, in a necrological table of the men who have rendered themselves eminent by their mental qualities, and who have died during the previous twelve months, thirty-eight names. Of nine of these the ages are not noted—they were not known. Only two of the number died under fifty years of age, only four under sixty years of age, only five under seventy years of age, and the remaining eighteen between seventy and ninety years of age. Let any one take thirty-eight unintellectual men in like manner who have died within the same time, and see if he can find any thing like such an exhibition of human longevity. Longevity is demonstrative of a generally healthy and happy condition of the individual by whom it is realised. Prolongation of life is a symptom which cannot to any extent be combined with that which renders life a burden and suffering. Nor has it been so. In one of the very amusing works of literary anecdote and comment put forth by the elder D'Israeli is a chapter on "Literary Old Age," which is full of illustrations of the condition in which a life well spent in the employment of the faculties places men when they approach the impassable boundary of their mortal being:

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"'Even yet I am learning,' was the concise inscription on an ingenious device of an old man placed in a child's go-cart, with an hour-glass upon it; which, it is said, Michael Angelo applied to his own vast genius in his ninetieth year."*

"The opening," says D'Israeli, "of one of La Mothe le Vayer's treatises is very striking: 'I should but ill return the favours God has granted me in the eightieth year of my age, should I allow myself to give way to that shameless want of occupation which all my life I have condemned;' and the old man proceeds with his 'Observations on the Composition and Reading of Books.' 'If a man be a bubble of air, it is then time that I should hasten to my task, for my eightieth year admonishes me to get my baggage together ere I leave the world,' wrote Varro, in opening his curious treatise *De Re Rusticâ*, which the sage lived to finish; and which, after nearly two thousand years, the world possesses. 'My works are many, and I am old; yet I can still fatigue and tire myself with writing more,' says Petrarch in his 'Epistle to Posterity.' The literary character has been fully occupied in the eightieth and ninetieth year of life. Isaac Walton still glowed, while writing some of the most interesting biographies, in his eighty-fifth year; and in the ninetieth, enriched the poetical world with the first publication of a romantic tale by Chalkhill, the friend of Spenser. Bodmer beyond eighty was occupied on Homer, and Wieland on Cicero's Letters."

And if, from instances of comparatively recent date, we were to look back for practical exhibitions of mental grandeur preserving itself in its full proportionate development through the period of old age, even to its farthest limits, we should find no lack of them either in profane or in sacred history. When cupidity endeavoured, in the old age of the great tragic poet of Greece, to wrest his possessions from him and to put him under tutelage, Sophocles rose before his Athenian judges with the roll of his Œdipus of Colonos in his hand, and indignantly refuted the imputation by reading some of the grandest passages of that grand dramatic composition, which, like himself, strong in age, remains to this day in all its vigour, and will never wax feeble

* *The Literary Character*, cap. xxii.

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in its power over the imagination and heart of the student till humanity itself shall grow old and wither away. Or we might look to the man of God who led the children of Israel through the wilderness—the great Jewish legislator. We are told that his age when he accomplished this wonderful work had arrived at 120 years; and yet, says the record, his eye had not waxed dim, nor was his natural strength abated. His arm could no longer raise the buckler or wield the sword, but yet it could be raised; and as it was uplifted, the hosts of Israel triumphed, and the armies of Amalek fled before them. He could yet pour forth his song, with all its strong appeals to earth and Heaven, invoking both to hear the words of that God whom he had represented in the institutions which he gave to the descendants of Abraham; and the profundity of his observation and the light of his wisdom mingled with the dictates of inspiration as, on the borders of the promised land, he commanded them to serve the Lord their God, and promised, "So shall your days be long in the land which the Lord your God hath given you."

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HEALTH OF MIND.

No. II.

March 4th, 1838.

[At the commencement of this lecture, Mr. Fox recapitulated the leading points of the previous one. He then made a citation from some lectures by the Rev. Joseph Hamilton, concerning which he observed:]

THEIR object is to promote self-instruction, and especially to rectify the undue preponderance which, in institutions designed to promote this object, has usually been given to the physical over the intellectual and moral sciences. He maintains that the language of imagination, as it has issued from those who were best qualified to give it utterance, and to claim the listening attention of men's minds and hearts, is not a language merely addressed to, and capable of comprehension by, the few; but that it appeals to the common sense of humanity, sinks into the common heart of humanity, and should be treated as one of those great and universal agencies, the influence of which should be felt, not merely in the elaborate course of instruction for higher stations, but which should mingle itself with the common education of the great masses of our country.

[Passing to a consideration of the moral faculties, he said:]

When I speak of moral principle or moral taste, I mean not something described by the moralists of a certain school as innate, and defying all calculation or analysis,—some sort of instinct belonging to our being, on which it is quite vain and useless to reason,—I mean that which is the result of all the faculties and powers we possess and exercise; all taste, which ever involves associations that belong to the training, however they may be modified by the tendencies of the original constitution. There is scarcely any thing

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called taste, even of the simplest description, in which the power of association is not to be discerned. With respect to the pleasures of the palate, we find that people inhabiting different countries have their preferences, resulting from the early food on which they feed, or which belongs to the region they inhabit. The roast beef of old England gives the sensation of cannibalism to the more delicate appetite of the Frenchman; the oil in which the Russian serf or Cossack indulges, is only disposed of in other countries to replenish the lamp of the student. Each country has its peculiar productions, or peculiar modes of preparing those productions, in which it delights, but which find no sympathy in the people of other countries. In every land, in every state of society, we find habits and preferences, even of the simplest kind, which show the early influence of association in the formation of taste.

And so with the effect of colours on the eye. The descriptions of antique paintings, and of the effects which they produced, have sorely puzzled modern artists—so much so, that many of those who have joined antique learning with their artistical acquirements have contended that lexicographers have erred from age to age in giving the proper translation of the terms of art and descriptions of the colours which are employed in classical writings. And we know that the Greeks were accustomed to disfigure, as we should think, with paint, some of those god-like marble forms, which fix our gaze and admiration as well by the beauty of the material as by the exquisiteness of the formation and finish.

So, too, with the enjoyment of the scenery of nature: in the mind which appreciates this, the power of association, and of something like education and training, is abundantly evident. It is not the native of the loveliest or grandest country that best feels its beauties—at least, not until after its contrast with different kinds of scenery has tended to awaken in him the perception of that which otherwise must have passed unheeded. A native, for instance, of the isles of Scotland, and one who in after life became strongly sensible of all the grand and impressive contrasts of their scenery—their bleak and towering mountains, their deep ravines, and their wild torrents—acquired his first sense of the beauty of this scenery when, from the top of the church-tower of

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Taunton, he gazed far and wide on the extensive flats of Somersetshire. It is often through contrast, in the revulsion, that the perception is produced.

If taste be the result of association as well as of original constitution, which, of course, exercises its power of modification—if it be so in that which is most simple, in that which is most physical and material, or that which applies merely to the power of perception of external form and colour—much more must it be so in any thing so complicated as moral subjects, in subjects involving so many different relations, and implying such diversified consequences.

Moral taste, sense, or principle is a grand result, a most important and magnificent result, to be produced by the human constitution—not one of the instinctive elements of its formation. How this moral taste is formed, he who has studied such a work as Hartley's will be at no loss to explain. He will perceive how the elementary associations of physical pain and physical pleasure become linked; how we are led out of ourselves; how secondary enjoyments tend to indefinite growth, while the primary always tend to grow fainter, and eventually to wear out; and how thus the growth of mind may be carried on, one class dying away, the other increasing, strengthening, and multiplying, until in the progress of immortality we may well imagine that the most developed moral taste becomes the link by which to bind together the emotions, thoughts, and enjoyments that belong to the wide universe of intellect and moral being.

In Dr. Southwood Smith's work on the *Philosophy of Health*, the progress is indicated of the development from man's organic life of his animal life, of the development again from his animal life of his intellectual life, and again from his intellectual life of his moral life. We are thus conducted by an unbroken sequence from that which constitutes man an existence without conscious animation to that which makes him only a little lower than the angels.

In tracing more particularly the influence of moral principle or taste upon intellectual health, we may take some of the most prominent exercises of this taste or principle. They have all of them an obvious and close connection with that state in which truth is best discerned and

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most effectually applied to our conduct. For instance, I call reverence one of the developments of moral principle or taste: not the low servility that cringes before station—not the admiring gaze on the appendages of wealth, rank, or title—not, in religion, the slavish superstition that thinks to bribe or placate a Deity, supposed to be offended, by the infliction of stripes, by grovelling penance, by confession, the exaggerated confession, of humility and of depravity,—but the appreciation, the enlightened and heartfelt estimate, of that which is superior. Now, this gives refreshment and strength to the mind in its inquiries after truth, and it is very often in itself the means of a revelation of the truth. Like mercy, this feeling is ever mightiest in the mightiest; the greatest minds have felt it the most strongly; and the poet of our country whose moral taste and principle have the most strongly recommended him to general recognition—I mean Milton—has, in the compositions *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, commemorated in terms of veneration and regard the four most distinguished poets who preceded him—Chaucer and Spenser, Ben Jonson and Shakespeare.

"To own no superior in the world but God that made the world" was once the recommendation to a classical student. It was a most erroneous one. The real student of truth, whose mind is in a healthy position, and in a state to advance towards nobler positions, delights in discovering superiority, delights in dwelling on all the acquirements that constitute that superiority, realises them to himself, and by that realisation grows into the image which he contemplates with so honest, so pure, so submissive, but so inspiring a feeling.

Another moral requisite towards mental health, and without which I apprehend it can never be found in full perfection, is that which relates to equality, as the one just mentioned relates to superiority—I mean that which is derived from the reciprocity of sympathy, as prompted by affection. The most moral and philosophic poet of our times has made in one of his productions a grateful and feeling allusion to the sympathy which, if it did not produce his creations, stimulated their production, and helped to supply that energy, that strength, that enjoyment, that gladness of heart and soul in his enduring labours, which

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crowns them with their highest value. I allude to the poem commencing—

"She was a phantom of delight,"

and especially to the closing verse:

"And now I see with eye serene
The very pulse of the machine;
A Being breathing thoughtful breath,
A Traveller between life and death;
The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill;
A perfect Woman, nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort, and command;
And yet a Spirit still, and bright
With something of angelic light."

Among the many lessons of the mythos, in the book of Genesis, of what is called the fall of man, we find this inculcated by the writer,—that God thought it not good for man to be alone; and the declaration, coupled with the allegory, must be taken as meaning that parity of the moral and intellectual state which is best for the progressive condition of human nature. In the description which the writer of that curious and instructive mythos has given, there was no such disparity as that one of the first two human beings could remain secure in the arbitrary righteousness which was to be shown in obedience to an arbitrary injunction, while the other of them departed from it. This was altogether incompatible with the mental and moral quality, and consequent identification of moral sympathy, which the author of that work intended to portray, and which is interpreted by Milton in his magnificent version of the transaction: for it is not, as some have represented,—it is not in a tone of deep despondency, it is not in utter despair and annihilation, that the majestic work of *Paradise Lost* concludes. Whatever there may be in the bold imaginings of the poem throughout its progress, and whatever colour of melancholy may be thrown over its last few lines, they yet leave an impression which, amid all that saddens, gives strength and a presage of happiness. The melancholy gives way even to a feeling of satisfaction as we dwell upon that noble termination of the poem:

"The world was all before them, where to choose
Their place of rest, and Providence their guide.
They, hand in hand, with wand'ring steps and slow,
Through Eden took their solitary way."

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To moral influences of this description, by which the mind is nerved in the pursuit of truth, we may add that continuous, that well-preserved respect which makes a man ever place his own opinion of himself above the opinion of others, however theirs may involve his interest. He who is not true to himself in the ends he pursues, and in the means by which he strives to attain them, will not be true to any other individual, to any cause of justice or philanthropy, however loudly he may devote himself to its promotion, however forward he may sometimes present himself in the rank of its champions.

Confidence in man, in Providence, in God—recognition of plan in the material and moral world—reliance on the wisdom of its conduct through all its means,—this, which properly is religion—this, the highest reach of the moral faculties,—this also is the highest pervading ingredient of mental health. It is for the want of this that men have debased themselves to the playing of so many "fantastic tricks" and deceptions in religion—that they have had recourse to "pious frauds" to work upon the souls of the ignorant—that they have shown an absence of trust in those general and generous principles in alliance with which they might have held on a course of honour and usefulness,—and have forfeited all by building on the quicksand of temporary prejudices, and by looking to men's weakness rather than to their strength as the source of permanent power. It was for the want of this that Mahomet, the enthusiastic young prophet of the Divine Unity among an idolatrous nation, stained his soul with imposture, and so disfigured his pretensions, that slowly and reluctantly do men of other religions observe what there was in him of truth and goodness. It was for the want of this faith in humanity, and in the course of Providence, that Napoleon fell from his high estate, when he ceased to build on the principles which laid so broad a foundation for a rational power—a power received from the great masses of the people, and exercised in sympathy with them and for their advantage—to lay hold of outworn prejudices, which had already been crushed by that which had made him great.

There are those who believe in the infallibility of every portion of the Old and New Testaments—of every sentence and verse. Some of these expositors have been sorely

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puzzled with the language of the New Testament in the case of demoniacal possession; and to reconcile this with their notions of the knowledge and infallibility of the writers, and with their own denial of such possession, they have supposed that the evangelists, knowing better, used the current language of the vulgar prejudices and superstitions of their day. Now, if it were so, what a memorable lesson is given against any such conformity, any such untruthfulness! If the evangelists, knowing better, used this language in accommodation to vulgar prejudices, what has been the result? Why, that eighteen centuries have rolled away, and this vulgar superstition, this ignorant delusion, is still kept up in the minds of hundreds of thousands and millions by this accommodation of their language; and if those who are supposed to see into the truth of the matter, like them, imitate them in preaching the same accommodation, there seems no reason to suppose but that the error may be kept up for many and many a generation to come, and may indeed endure even to the world's end. Reverence in these matters is rather in the belief of their honest mistake than in the conjoint recognition of their infallibility and deception—that deception entailing on the world a long course of mistake and subterfuge, which involves so many important contradictions. Truth, above all things, I believe to have been their feeling, as it is the feeling of the most high and elevated morality, and that which most intimately associates itself with intellectual health.

But as the moral tends to the intellectual—as the intellectual generates and produces and perfects the moral—so is there a reaction which is well deserving of attention. The simplest elements of moral principle or taste act upon the intellect; and, as we advance in the formation of our being, as the powers gain strength, as they are cultivated and harmonised, they produce moral associations of the truest and best description. So, on the other hand, if the most ignorant and uncultivated and feeble-minded have sound moral associations produced in them, their minds will be preserved from many a mistake, and they will be raised above many a fallacy and prejudice which the most learned of their time and country might fall into. It is the observation of this that has made men speak of common sense with reverence, as beyond and above all the sciences.

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It was the truth of human nature which made Christ say, "He that doeth my will shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." Honest feeling was worth much more than all the power of casuistical reasoning possessed by the Scribes and Pharisees of Judæa. Thus it is that we often find the simple-hearted—with few means or appliances for the improvement of their minds, and yet less of stimulus to energetic application—going at once to the truth of questions in theology, in politics, in morals, which have occasioned interminable disputes among those who may be the most learned, and who are reckoned the wisest. They go at once to the simple principles of the thing, and the enunciation of what they think and feel commands veneration like that produced by the fact recorded in scripture, that "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings God perfecteth praise."

Mental health is one, in these its humblest, as in what might be adduced as its noblest exemplifications. There is coöperation—there is symmetrical development, feeble though it be, of the different faculties—there is moral principle or taste to train or regulate all. Thus is it in the humblest model of the human constitution that can be formed, of the coarsest materials, and on the smallest scale; and thus is it also in the noblest temple of human intelligence, where the proud pillars rise in their magnificence, where the arches seem to emulate the span of the heavens, where the sacrifice burns upon the altar, and where men recognise and adore the presence of an indwelling Deity.

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HEALTH OF MIND.

No. III.

March 11*th*, 1838.

THE two lectures already delivered on Health of Mind have conveyed the substance of what I had to say on that subject as considered solely in reference to the individual; but there are other bearings of this subject, external relations and influences, which suggest a variety of considerations that may not be altogether uninteresting. In adverting to some of these, it is needful to bear in mind the view which has already been taken. We have regarded health of mind as describing, indeed, one portion of human well-being, but as essentially connected with the whole. Health, in reference to the human constitution, is, in fact, one and indivisible. A sound state of mind is necessarily influenced largely by the bodily condition. The faculties are perverted by the tendency of physical disease, and there is in turn a reaction of the mind upon the coarser materials of our frame, which has made itself remarkable both in the calamities endured by those whose faculties were not well adjusted or exercised, and in the happier results which have been signally realised in the old age of many whose lives were spent in rendering the best services to their fellow-creatures.

We have regarded health of mind as consisting in the due subordination of our faculties, and in their proportionate cultivation: imagination supplies a useful stimulus to progress, while moral principle, or sense, is needful for the regulation of the whole, for realising the highest degree of well-being that can possibly be attained, and for the direction it gives to the faculties, for the clearness and lustre which it imparts to them in its different forms of veneration, of affection, of self-respect, and of religious principle, conducting man towards the highest excellence

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of his nature, and, consequently, towards the noblest happiness to which his aspirations can be directed.

Considering, then, these requisites of health of mind, one of the first questions, in extending the phraseology—slightly figurative though it may be—to other topics, is, What is meant by a healthy education? for this assuredly must be desirable, as one of the most important blessings which the human being can possess; and to this I fear there is yet ample occasion to answer by a string of negatives in reference to the mode in which education is usually conducted in this country. There cannot be an abundance of mental health in mature individuals, if the early instruction by which they are trained deserves not in all its arrangements, in its essence and in its influence, the name of health also. And, taking the constituent portions of mental health in the order in which they were adverted to in the previous lectures, we may well ask whether education tends to that first simple, elemental, material requisite, namely, a good education, physical constitution, and condition. Is it not very often the reverse? Is not female education especially so conducted as, either by the superficiality of the accomplishments it communicates, or else by the endless extent and variety of the knowledge which it endeavours to bestow on those whose future office is to be the training of others, actually to lay the foundation of an enervated physical condition throughout the remaining earthly existence of the individual? Nor is the case much better as regards the other sex. In a few instances, which are far from having become general, physical training may have been rendered a prominent feature, as it generally was in institutions characterised by the wisdom of some of the states of antiquity, especially of the Greek republics; but how little does it enter into the contemplation of ordinary teachers! Nor can it be otherwise where education is made the object of individual speculation, as it commonly is in this country. Were physical health and well-being, so essential as they are to mental health, to be consulted, would schools be located in the hearts of crowded cities, or even in their suburbs? Would there not be sought out for them such places as Nature herself has indicated as the fitting nests wherein young humanity may be fledged? Would they not be placed by the wide common, or the

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heathy hill, or the flowing stream, where the stars might be seen at night through the transparent atmosphere, and where the wild flowers, in their scorn of arrangement, would stimulate the mind to a love of natural objects, and an inquiry into their properties? Would not schools be located where the strongest stimulus would be given to youth to put forth the powers of the body, and where appropriate sights and sounds would act upon the mind, and give it a lively, active, wholesome curiosity, and supply the means of knowledge direct from the overflowing fountains of Nature herself? In this way there would not only be the maturing of the young limbs, but there would also be that quickening of the senses which is so desirable; for how much of the sensitive power of men lies dormant in the great masses of society throughout what are called civilised communities! The firm foot, the untiring frame, the keen scent, the quick eye, of the Indian are as a tale of romance to us, and we can scarcely conceive of humanity being brought to that degree of perfection in its simplest physical endowments; and yet there is nothing but what each youth might be trained to in our own land, with all the advantages that the rich associations of science and history and poetry would give to the senses in their exercise, making them perceive not merely the form and colour of the objects they contemplated, but the beauty and order of their arrangement also. Such should be their places, with diversified means of contemplating the works of art as well as of nature, the grandeur of man's aspirings, and achievements, in imbibing, from the great source of good, his own visions of truth and beauty, and realising them in painting, in marble, or in books. All should, on proper occasions, be subjected to the observation of youth, and brought to bear on the training of man to be a well-informed, active, industrious, aspiring, and useful as well as intellectual being.

Memory, the lowest, the merest drudge, of our faculties, in subservience to others of a higher and nobler order in our constitution,—how is that, in many cases, trained? By the mere effect of habit and of repetition; by treating it like brute matter; not observing that memory becomes retentive in proportion as attention is induced by interest.

The *morale* of a school is found chiefly in the play-

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ground—chiefly in the rough rules which children form for one another, and by which they raise up a system often at variance with that impressed on them in school-hours, or when they are marched to church or chapel. Beyond this, the chief result to which they attain is learning how hollow and conventional the world's morality is—the enunciation of precepts which the merest child conceives his elders do not construe in their literal sense, do not reverence in their own hearts, do not make the real and efficient guides of their own lives. And, in addition to this, the spirit of envy, under the name of emulation, leads to the putting forth of exertions which undermine character, while they seem to extend the memory, or excite some of its mental powers.

I do not say this with any idea of making an attack on the school-system of this country. By no means. It is as good as it can be under the circumstances. It is as good as it can be while private teaching is made a mere trade, and while public teaching is made a mere sinecurism or jobbery in public money. So long as there is none of that solicitude about competency for the work of education which there is about competency for the transfer of property, or for guarding the health and condition of man against extreme sickness; so long as we leave that altogether to chance which is, in fact, far more precious and valuable than other matters wherein we take so much pains to insure the proper qualification of the individual whose services are called into action,—things must go on as they are; and the only wonder is that they go on so well—that those who take up education, either as a lucrative occupation, or as one by which they hope to realise the means of subsistence, should go so far and do so much as they actually accomplish. This is the more extraordinary, when we note the annoyance to which they are continually exposed by the ignorance, the prejudice, often the worldliness and sordidness, of parental interference, which wishes for the name of education indeed for its offspring, but which yet is consulting future interests, looking to connection and opinion, and thinking of any thing rather than of the best mode, intellectual and moral, as well as physical, in which their offspring can be trained. But while I would throw no censures on a class which is not only as good as any other class, but in many respects, per-

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haps, considerably better, I would yet say that this subject deserves universal regard, until a most material improvement be effected; that it cannot be considered, in its present state, without exciting strong emotions in all well-constituted minds;—and that if there be a mind which looks to the rising generation with affection and fondness, that is content to become extinct in the world, in order to live again in the form of its offspring, and to feel happiness in their happiness, and success in their triumphs; if there be a feeling that, seemingly originating in animal instinct, grows to strength that overshadows all other strength and emotion, and is bound up in the futurity of beings now only in their first course of elemental training; if there be a patriotism that would have our country not a collection of conventional, of hypocritical, of dishonest people, but signalised by its truthfulness, by its knowledge, by its progress, and realising the ancient prerogative of England of "teaching the nations how to live;" if there be a philanthropy that delights to contemplate humanity exerting all its faculties, putting forth all its powers, growing gradually, but certainly, to its ample and splendid maturity, and then imbibing from the heavens and the earth all the good its Creator meant it to be capable of receiving; and if there be a religion that will contemplate God as a benignant Spirit, the pattern of all moral excellence, the ideal of all that we can regard as constituting what commands our reverence, and that will see his moral image in his creatures;—why, then, every principle, every action of that paternal love, of that righteous patriotism, of that wise philanthropy, and of that reverential religion, should be an impulse directing every effort by which education may be improved and its blessings extended, and by which the function of the teacher can be preserved safe from the interference of a mere selfish trading disposition, from the arts and influence of faction, from the schemes of worldly politicians, and from the domination of bigoted sectarians, or of mere selfish and worldly establishments.

This term healthiness, which we have applied to the mind, may also, and still bearing in mind that interpretation, be referred to occupations which deserve to be distinguished into healthy and unhealthy, not only in their action on the external frame, but in their action on the

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powers within—upon our understanding and our *morale*. Their action on the frame, indeed, is obvious enough. Different trades and occupations have their different degrees of longevity but too mournfully marked in statistical tables. Some there are that limit the duration of life to those who engage in them within very narrow bounds, though the desire of higher remuneration still keeps the ranks filled of those who venture on this forlorn hope in the commercial or manufacturing world: and when, on particular occasions, such as that which a few years ago led the different trades in London to assemble and go in procession to petition for the Dorchester labourers,—when such occasion intervenes, and they are marshalled in ranks, one may trace, in the different appearances which they present, the different influences of their several occupations in promoting or marring the work of Nature in the formation of human beings. Devoutly is it to be wished that men's occupations could be so arranged that there should be no distinctions of this description—no inevitable lot of imperfection, infirmity, or suffering entailed upon any one by the services which he renders the community in return for the physical support with which the community supplies him.

But besides these, there are actions upon our mental functions to be distinctly traced in a great variety of human occupations. I call that occupation mentally unhealthy which only brings into action some one or other of our faculties, keeping the rest in an unnatural dormancy, until they fade, and seem almost entirely to wither from the soul—where there is, perhaps, a sharpened intellect to perceive agreements or differences of one class, and a total want of perception to see agreements or differences of another description. I call that an unhealthy occupation where the connection is cut off between what the mind thinks or the heart feels, and what the tongue speaks —where free utterance is not allowed to the individual—where it is the condition of his earning his daily bread, that, if his soul receives its daily bread, it shall give no external indications of the strength which it derives therefrom, the enjoyments which are created for it, or the sufferings to which it is exposed. I call that a still more mentally unhealthy occupation in which, besides the suppression of the thoughts or feelings of the individual on any subject what-

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ever, there is a tendency towards equivocation, perhaps a direct implication of falsehood, a violation of truth, imposed as part of the duty, the business obligation, of the individual in earning his daily bread. And most of all is that an unhealthy occupation where one man's gain is another man's loss—where external good is to be realised for one party by diminishing that which is already possessed by other parties.

Now, I know that in giving way to these different inducements there is much more lack of courage than is commonly supposed. It is possible for the individual, however much his mind may be called forth exclusively in one direction by his occupation, to employ his leisure hours in giving proportionate cultivation to his other faculties, and thus preserving their order and harmony. It is possible even for a dependent to assert for himself, and that without any extraordinary degree of offensiveness, an independence of opinion on religious, political, or social matters. It is possible for a tradesman to avoid the common arts by which the worth of his wares is exaggerated and that of his neighbours' depreciated, and to pursue a course of simplicity and of strict mental, as well as legal and external, integrity throughout his whole career. It is possible for the pleader to disdain the fee that bribes him to a cause that he knows to be unholy and unjust, and to express no confidence but what he really feels, to use no arguments but what he really appreciates. And when individuals have the manliness to take this course, I apprehend it will often be found that mountains of apprehended difficulties will sink to the common level of the path before them as they advance, and that they will be found to have acted upon a plan that will command the respect of others, as well as insure their own. At any rate, it is in this way alone that they can secure their health of mind—their soul's health—that which gives them the opportunity of attaining a condition that deserves to be called the well-being of humanity.

The bad effects of an exclusive cultivation of some portion of our being, and the good of a more extended cultivation, are easily to be traced in connection with names with which most people are familiar. Addison, addicted as an exclusive occupation to studying composition, carefully polishing the style of his thoughts, and putting his active powers in

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abeyance, showed himself unable, though he held an official station, to pen with a proper degree of readiness an official despatch in an important emergency. Dr. Johnson, after the receipt of his pension, made conversation his business, his actual office, and daily occupation—he lived in it, and accordingly said a great number of striking things, which have been carefully chronicled,—and the basis of his reputation from that time to this has been most unduly elevated: for it is clear that, in doing this, he enfeebled his judgment of evidence, his perception of truth, and vented the most contradictory opinions on some topics that have ever been urged by even the most violent disputants. Akenside, the author of the *Pleasures of the Imagination*, when he came to the metropolis, and was absorbed in the toils of a laborious profession, did not slacken in his attention to physical, though addicted to metaphysical, studies: he diversified the employment of his days by studies of subjects in metaphysical poetry, which marked the dawn of his youth with so much brightness, and which still preserves him as one of the noblest spirits this country has produced. The Apostle Paul, or his parents for him, checked the peculiar character of a merely rabbinical education. He sat at the feet of Gamaliel, and was trained in all that the Jewish scribes had said in illustration of their laws and traditions; but as a balance to this we find, from his writings and speeches, that he was instructed in the writings, the history, the poetry, the dramatic literature, of the Grecian people—that he was acquainted with the principles of Oriental philosophy; when an emergency arose, he knew what belonged to the character, to the privileges, to the rights of Roman citizens, and by his diversity of mind was qualified to fill the office of apostle to the Gentiles.

The Creator, in gifting man with so many faculties and powers, has indicated that, in the progress of his being, the proportions that they bear to one another should be constantly observed—each receiving the training which is appropriate to each.

As we apply this word "health" by an easy metaphor to education and occupation, so assuredly may we to literature; and the term "a healthy literature" is one that can require short exposition, after what I have advanced on this topic. That cannot be a healthy literature which depends on

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patronage, which has constantly to look up to the lofty in station, seeking their names to gild its effusions, and regarding their munificence as its passport to the world's attention. That cannot be a healthy literature which is engaged in as a mere trade; in which it is sought to accomplish the production of an assigned amount, in the same way as the operative, by his mechanical agency, produces so much of any material with which he has to furnish the market. That cannot be regarded as a healthy literature in which partisanship spreads its venomous influence—in which men are banded into factions—and where, instead of contemplating truth, that only is regarded which may best serve as a weapon wherewith to wound or battle with our adversaries. Nor can that be a healthy literature over which sectarianism spreads its blight; proscribing works on account of the opinions entertained by their authors, elevating some and depressing others, with no right reference to talent, genius, spirit, worth, or tendency; but measuring all by the hard dogmas of its own barren creed. And so far as these influences prevail over the literature of any country, it is indeed in an unhealthy condition.

The evil of modern times is that, while the power of individuals, irrespective of external considerations, to provide for the permanent expression of their knowledge, of their speculations, of their aspirations, has been very much augmented—while literary productions have been rendered more dependent on the masses than they ever were before in the world's history—those masses have not yet been so well cultivated, have not been so highly trained, nor have they their judgments so matured, as to separate the grain from the chaff, to distinguish between that which is entitled to reverential attention, and that which, being merely a ministration to their prejudice, perhaps even to their ignorance itself, only deserves to be thrown away in scorn. It may take some time for the world to adjust the variation which has here been produced from the best state of a literary community; but still one can form an ideal of the literary character,—and one that has been repeatedly realised in our own countrymen. One of the best, the truest, the most impressive characters of this description with which I am acquainted, is that given of Schiller by Carlyle in his Life of that poet. It may be regarded, not only as delineating

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the man, but as presenting us with a grand ideal of the literary character. He says: "Literature was his creed, the dictate of his conscience; he was an apostle of the Sublime and Beautiful, and this his calling made a hero of him. For it was in the spirit of a true man that he viewed it, and undertook to cultivate it; and its inspirations constantly maintained the noblest temper in his soul. The end of Literature was not, in Schiller's judgment, to amuse the idle, or to recreate the busy, by showy spectacles for the imagination, or quaint paradoxes and epigrammatic disquisitions for the understanding: least of all was it to gratify in any shape the selfishness of its professors, to minister to their malignity, their love of money, or even of fame. For persons who degrade it to such purposes, the deepest contempt of which his kindly nature could admit was at all times in store. 'Unhappy mortal!' says he to the literary tradesman, the man who writes for gain, 'Unhappy mortal! who with science and art, the noblest of all instruments, effectest and attemptest nothing more than the day-drudge with the meanest! who, in the domain of perfect freedom, bearest about in thee the spirit of Slave!' As Schiller viewed it, genuine Literature includes the essence of philosophy, religion, art; whatever speaks to the immortal part of man. The daughter, she is likewise the nurse of all that is spiritual and exalted in our character. The boon she bestows is truth; truth not merely physical, political, economical, such as the sensual man in us is perpetually demanding, ever ready to reward, and likely in general to find; but truth of moral feeling, truth of taste, that inward truth in its thousand modifications, which only the most ethereal portion of our nature can discern, but without which that portion of it languishes and dies, and we are left divested of our birthright, thenceforward 'of the earth earthy,' machines for earning and enjoying, no longer worthy to be called the Sons of Heaven. The treasures of Literature are thus celestial, imperishable, beyond all price: with her is the shrine of our best hopes, the palladium of pure manhood; to be among the guardians and servants of this is the noblest function that can be intrusted to a mortal. Genius, even in its faintest scintillations, is 'the inspired gift of God;' a solemn mandate to its owner to go forth and labour in his sphere, to keep

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alive 'the sacred fire' among his brethren, which the heavy and polluted atmosphere of this world is for ever threatening to extinguish. Woe to him if he neglect this mandate, if he hear not its small still voice! Woe to him if he turn this inspired gift into the servant of his evil or ignoble passions; if he offer it on the altar of vanity, if he sell it for a piece of money!"*

Such were the sentiments which inspired Schiller—which men of our own language and land have realised also—which assert the true dignity of literature, which give it its proper motive, which make it, as it were, a continuous revelation of heaven to earth. It is only by an appreciation of works which bear this lofty stamp—it is only by a conscientious judgment in all whose exertions in any way promote the influences of literature—that its state can be preserved healthy, and that it can be carried onwards towards the accomplishment of its first work as an instructor of humanity.

We may apply this expression of "healthiness" to the state of society, political, civil, and religious. It belongs to communities, and to the physical being and mental state of communities, as well as to those of individuals. A society is not in a healthy state physically when it is, for instance, in the condition of a poor colony settled in a wilderness, where the utmost toil of every one is necessary in order to guard against the perils of their lot and to realise produce enough to keep them in the bare means of support, and where none of the arts can flourish that alone make it life to live. A nation is not mentally and morally in a healthy condition, though raised far above this, which, realising by mechanical appliances and by commercial arrangements wealth in the produce of the earth or in its different operations, yet has no corresponding wealth in that which constitutes the mental treasury; but which, with advantages like those possessed by the United States of America, levels before the commercial spirit the better functions and powers of the mind, and is content to import taste and literature—import them, indeed, as if the feelings of the heart, as if the thoughts of intelligence, as if that which constitutes the spirituality of man, could be imported and conveyed from one nation to

* Carlyle's *Life of Schiller*, 2d edit., 1845; p. 245.

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another like the merest material produce,—as if these could ever be of any thing else than indigenous growth; as if all that constituted real national literature and ministered to national health of mind could be any thing but the free outpourings of free spirits, imbued with the associations of that country, formed on its own model, trained under the influence of its philosophers, sages, and divines, and by them enabled to realise the idea of the national character, and to guide the population towards its attainment.

Society is not in a healthy condition if there be physical want—if from one to two millions of people may be at different portions of the year in a starving condition, as they are so regularly in Ireland, showing the most distressed and pining poverty, descending even to the lowest and poorest products of the earth for the means of physical support, sacrificing health, and with that sacrificing so much of mind and feeling, and producing a gangrene in society which cannot but extend itself far and wide, deranging every portion of its varied functions, intellectual, political, and moral.

Society is not in a healthy state where labour is not allowed its free scope and its just remuneration, where its very bread is taxed for the benefit of those who have appropriated the soil, and man only realises perhaps a moiety or thereabouts of what the strain of his bones and muscles and sinews has entitled him to; forfeiting thereby the means of balancing these bodily exertions with mental exercises, of acquiring for himself by intellectual labour a good superior to that which he acquires for society by his bodily labour, and of laying broad the foundation of an harmonious and orderly community.

So, politically, society may be in an unhealthy state. It is so unless the utility of all the offices which it recognises is felt by the people—unless from the crowned monarch down to the merest administrator of civic or rural police it traces functions which are really held in respect for their acknowledged subserviency to the security or prosperity of the whole. It is so unless its laws are recognised for wisdom and for justice—unless they never disgust by cruelty, never oppress by expensiveness, never deserve to be held up to ridicule for capriciousness. Society is unhealthy unless its institutions are so arranged as that those who have the most

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power are believed to have the most wisdom also; and so that, if there be forms of representation, identity is felt between the body which appoints and the body which is appointed. In the absence of this, in an imperfect degree of this, there is an unhealthiness which cannot but germinate discontent and turbulence,—which cannot but lead to oppression on the one side, and eventually perhaps to resistance on the other—which is the source of incalculable evils, of evils that are all traceable to the want of a harmony, a preparation, an arrangement in the body politic analogous to that which exists in the human frame, and which is observable by the faculties of human intelligence.

So a community is in an unhealthy state unless its nominally recognised religion and morality be the religion of the feeling and of the lives of the people. If these are mere forms—if words are repeated only as words which are not associated with sanctity of idea and conception in the popular mind—if forms are sustained from age to age, not because they express the outgushings of the human heart, but because they are connected with tithes or with endowments—if precepts are continually repeated which it is never expected should be really observed, and which are explained away by a hundred jesuitical equivocations, and by the exercise of casuistry, when they should be brought into practice,—then is a nation in an unhealthy and unwholesome state religiously, which nothing can cure but the allowance of that individuality in which each man asserts and promulgates his own opinions freely, and, by developing the powers and tendencies of his own individual nature, shows to society the morality which Nature has impressed upon him.

It may be said, What have individuals to do with topics that branch out thus widely? I reply, Every individual has much to do with them. It used to be a common saying against the advocates of reform, Let each one reform himself, and he will contribute the most that can be done to legislative reform. We do not find, however, that the actual change was brought about precisely in that way, but that it was brought about by men's feeling that they could not reform themselves if they excluded attention to the political condition and to the state of others; and this was the part of their individual reform that proved the most efficient in

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the results in question. And so it is here. It may be said that mental healthiness is best consulted by each man endeavouring to bring his own mind into such state. So, no doubt, it is. But a healthy mind cannot be a mind indifferent to the relations, the innumerable and important relations, of the individual with society, civil, political, and religious. A right state of thought and feeling with regard to this is one essential part of mental healthiness in individuals. The individual affects, as he is affected by, the whole of which he forms a part. For thus it is in the spiritual world, as it is in the material. The remotest planet in our solar system, while it rolls round its own orbit, while it fulfils its own vicissitudes of day and of night, of summer and of winter, contributes also, by the eternal laws of nature, an influence which is felt throughout that whole system, from the minutest satellite to the mighty central orb; and it does its part, in the accomplishment of its own course, towards the order of the whole, towards the promotion of their beauty, of their utility, and of their stability.

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READ YOUR BIBLE.

March 18*th*, 1838.

"READ your Bible," is an admonition very frequently given. It is addressed by parents to their children when they send them to school, or when they embark them on the perilous voyage of life. It is addressed by teachers to their pupils, as the accompaniment of the instructions which they offer them, or as the supplement of those instructions when they leave the tuition of the school to learn the lessons of the world. It is addressed by patrons to the objects of their care and liberality, when they would endeavour to render their pecuniary bounties, or the different means of relief or improvement which their charity provides, efficient in the highest degree and to the widest extent. And it is the precept of godfathers and godmothers, when they would discharge themselves of the spiritual responsibilities which, according to the forms of the Church, they undertake, and would remove from their own shoulders to those of the individual himself that task which is nominally, at least, undertaken in the spiritual office in which they profess to believe. And the admonition thus given, and thus frequently repeated, is one which is attended with results sometimes good, sometimes bad, and sometimes indifferent. It is given in many cases as a simple formality, and as a simple formality is it acted upon or disregarded; and there are cases in which we may trace, if not to the precept itself, yet to the mode in which it is given, and the mode in which it is taken and understood, consequences which are far from being of a character to be contemplated with complacency; for sometimes scripture-reading only forms the pert young Pharisee, whose mind is stored with the mere words of texts, and who thinks himself thereby possessed of knowledge both human and divine —who sets himself up for a judge of others, and of the

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opinions, worship, and moral conduct of his neighbours—who is himself walking in the right way, and perceives that all who disagree with him, and with the clan to which he has joined himself, must therefore be going in the wrong way, in the broad path that leads to perdition—and who regards the initiation which, by textual reading, he acquires into some religious body or denomination, with the same sort of vanity with which the young recruit regards his colours, and is disposed to exercise similar arrogance towards those not enlisted in his religious profession—a disposition which, as he advances in life, forms the old, crabbed, bigoted sectarian; confident of his own sublapsarianism or his superlapsarianism, of his free will or his election—treating texts like stones wherewith to pelt those who may disagree with him—summing up all the elements of all divine knowledge concerning time and eternity in the few cramped propositions which form his doctrinal creed, and going thus through life with the most supercilious confidence in his own infallibility. Or, with a different mind, and little of this hardness, it may produce consequences equally undesirable, such as feebleness, with a false standard of morality, and perhaps a ceremonial standard. Individuals so circumstanced find themselves exposed to temptations which they have no inward power to resist,—but, impressed with the efficacy of repentance, they go on sinning and repenting, very often making sin where the laws of God and nature have not made it, and exercising repentance which neither God nor nature can regard as of any value, because it implies not reformation and change of mind; until at last they end either in that wretched and dark despondency which has clouded so many minds, or in that fallacious enthusiasm which is just as painful an object of contemplation to the rational observer. Again, in a third class, it leads to that reconcilement between what is arbitrarily deemed duty by theologians, and what the world reckons such, which enables them to get through life in what they regard as a most comfortable state of insensibility. They do their duty, they think, both by God and man; for do they not read the Bible, say their prayers, and pay their debts? and holding this as all that is necessary to a good conscience, they reconcile themselves to the absence of every positive and active virtue, to all that can

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dignify their own characters, or be the means of blessing society.

In these cases, the reading of the Bible bears no fruit to justify the earnestness of the admonition. How, then, is it to be read, to lead to an assuredly good result? I announced the subject of the present lecture in order to give some hints which, from the form into which I shall throw them, may be called rules for reading the scriptures—not rules which are advanced in any way to justify the notion of imposing them upon the mind as needful always to be observed, in order to reap any good results; but suggestions of what seem to my own mind most likely to realise the truth and power contained in that volume.

The first of these is, to read the scriptures connectedly—that is, to read them in considerable portions, and not in those very minute pittances which are but too commonly all that is dealt out as the spiritual food of the individual from time to time. To produce the best results, it seems to me that seldom less than one entire book of the scriptures should be read at one sitting. There are exceptions, of course, as in the Proverbs; for that book, with the exception of the introductory portion of it, consists of sentences which, when taken in their detached form, convey quite as much truth and force to the mind as when a number of them are read consecutively. The Psalms are another exception, for they are entire compositions, most of them within a very small compass. Something of the same kind, although with not quite so much accuracy, might be said of the parables, although these have always bearings upon and relation to the circumstances in which they were delivered. But no doubt with the scriptures, as with other books, after the entire scope has been apprehended and taken into the mind, there will be passages read as extracts or fragments, which by their association will call up all that is necessary in the surrounding portion of the work to give them their due effect on the mind.

The division into chapters and verses is an arbitrary one, which should be disregarded altogether. It tends to disfigure the meaning to the eye, and very much to obstruct its entrance into the understanding. Scarcely any book mapped out and apportioned in that way exercises its proper influence over the reader. The Bible is divided

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into distinct books, nor are any of these of such extraordinary length that they may not be made the subject of a single attentive perusal. The absurdity of the common mode of reading separate chapters, taken indiscriminately from the different works, is so great, that it would really be inconceivable, were it not so generally practised. One scarcely knows how to find an equal absurdity whereby to illustrate this. But suppose a bookseller were to bind up, as one work, Newton's *Principia*, Hume's *History of England*, a drama or two of Shakespeare's, the *Odes* of Cowper, the *Sermons* of Jeremy Taylor, three or four biographies of some illustrious individuals, and the theological controversies of Whitfield and Wesley; let these, all regarded as one book, be cut up into chapters and verses, and let any reader take an isolated portion here and there: what should we think of the operation on such a man's mind? what should we expect of learning, wisdom, knowledge, and good influences, although he read this collection diligently every night and morning, and made it a rule not to sleep or go about his customary vocations till he had read his portion? In the utter confusion, the want of distinct comprehension, in mixing up things the most heterogeneous, we should see an emblem of what frequently takes place from the usual mode of reading the scriptures. Why, the design, the general design and spirit, of any particular work in the Old or New Testament is but rarely apprehended, even by those who deem themselves very familiar with the scriptures. How few are there who enter into the spirit of the great controversy carried on in the book of Job—a controversy which has acted so powerfully on the greatest minds through successive ages! how few who comprehend thoroughly the tone and temper of the book of Ecclesiastes! Nay, how few imbibe clearly and distinctly the peculiar characteristics of the more familiar works of the New Testament!

When I say read connectedly, I mean as to the writings of the same author—I do not mean that sort of connection which is sometimes artificially created—a "harmony of the gospels"—an operation that tends to produce a great deal of discord rather than of harmony—by which the description of a particular event by one evangelist is pieced out by circumstances recorded by

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another evangelist, so as to produce what the harmoniser deems a connected view of the whole transaction. Now, this process, whether applied to the life of Christ in the four gospels, or whether carried back into the Old Testament, to the history in the books of Kings and Chronicles —is one which altogether obliterates the mental character of the separate writers, and so tends to introduce great confusion. The gospels set forth the moral unity of the character of Christ, yet in them all there is a diversity arising from the four writers, and this may be very distinctly noticed. The gospel of St. Matthew, for instanee, is peculiarly a Jewish gospel, written by a man whose principles were impregnated with Jewish peculiarities. He wrote the life of Christ feeling strongly and exclusively as a Jew, and accordingly he has grouped together the miracles, prophecies, and discourses of Christ—he has made his entire biography an argumentative work on the Messiahship of Christ, connecting it with the Old-Testament prophecies; and in every way he has written to show that the bearing of Christ's mission on Judaism and the Jews was uppermost in his mind; and this colours the whole record and view of the character of Christ as derived from it.

The gospel of St. Mark is written by one who was a proselytist of the Gentiles, but with Jewish feelings. He was a Jew and Gentile unionist in the bonds of Christian fellowship, but his own mind taking the Jewish side of the question; this being apparent in the selection he makes from the narrative of Matthew, and combines with his own additions and observations.

The gospel of St. Luke was also written by a Jew and Gentile proselytist, but one whose feelings were on the other side of the question from those of St. Mark—who was in all probability a Gentile proselyte, and wrote with the feelings of one—who had a less tendency for Jewish peculiarities of mind than the other writers had, a greater concern for the character and dignity of the Gentiles, and who is abundant in his records of the discourses of Christ in whatever tended to liberalise and extend the Jewish feeling and sink its nationality.

The gospel of St. John is the produce of a mind whose peculiarity was distinct from all the others—of a mind imbued with Oriental philosophy—of a mind which had gone

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into the speculations and emanations which afterwards made such a noise in the world under the name of mysticism. The simplicity of Christ's discourses is here less apparent than in the other evangelists. The mysticism reflects itself on the subject of its biography, and spreads itself through all its pages. Now, all these peculiarities, which belong to our general conception and appreciation of the gospels, which must interfere even with our construction of particular texts,—all these peculiarities are altogether annihilated in that method of producing a "harmony of the gospels" which blends them together, and thinks thereby to obtain a more perfect unity. It may gain a more complete catalogue of external facts, but it does not present that identification of the external with the internal, that diffusion of character into all that the man produces, which is necessary for our real appreciation. I say, therefore, read the scriptures connectedly—read them in such portions as that the whole of an argument, or purpose, is before you, and can sink into your mind and take possession of your thoughts.

My next rule is, to read them illustratively and imaginatively—to endeavour to realise both the material and external truths and the inward and spiritual truths which are there recorded. It is not long since a work was published to show that the scriptures were altogether what the writer called spiritual—that although there be such a place in maps of the world as the land of Canaan—that although there be such a people in the history of the world as the Jewish nation—yet that it is not this Canaan nor this people that is meant in the scriptures—that the Jordan there was no real river, but the stream of the water of life—that the hills and valleys, the woods and mountains, mentioned there, were not real hills and valleys, woods and mountains, but those which are figuratively, or what he calls spiritually, so; and that the patriarchs, kings, heroes, prophets, reformers of the scriptures, were not real historical personages like those of profane history, but that they were exemplifications, embodiments, of the faculties of man's mind or the events of his spiritual life, or the influence of the Divine Spirit upon his soul. And strange as this theory may appear, yet such might, for practical purposes, be the theory of many readers of the scriptures; for they go through the

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narrative, and they read the history of individuals, without at all bringing home to their imaginations the localities which are represented, the personages who are described, or the events which are recorded. They take no such place in their minds as do events, for instance, in the history of our country, those especially which approximate nearly to our own time. But there should be a vivid realisation if we would read the book to any purpose, however religious the subject to which it relates—however remote the scenery which it describes.

Commentators on the scriptures have sadly failed in their most essential task of bringing this reality home to the mind of the reader. Assistance is not to be sought in the ordinary class of theological expositors. It is rather to be found in such works as Michaelis *On the Writings of Moses*, where the enactments of the Jewish legislator are discussed in their bearing on the state of society, in the same way that lawyers or politicians discuss the tendency of a statute in our own times; in such works as Burder's *Manners and Customs of the East*, where their weddings, the state of arts among them, the habitual vocations of Oriental people, are described in a way to realise them to us like the different trades and professions practised in the world around us; in Jenning's *Jewish Antiquities*, which brings before us the different ranks of society, the different functions of the Jewish Church and State, the offices they had to perform, and the responsibilities imposed upon them, in the same way as if a description were given of the different functionaries of the Church and State in our own land; in such histories as those of Josephus, giving us to a large extent the same characters and transactions, but in different language, and bringing up the record to that great point of the dissolution of the Jewish polity which is needful to a complete view of scripture history;—such works as these, or such as Horne's *Introduction to the Reading of the Scriptures*, or the Pictorial Bible published by the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, are the most needful helps, especially combined with books which show the modes of thinking in Eastern countries and ancient times.

The best mode, perhaps, that could be adopted of making the scriptures distinctly understood, would be the forma-

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tion on a large and splendid plan of a Scripture Museum or Institution, of a place wherein something might be done of the same kind that is done in the British Museum by the collection of Greek and Roman and Egyptian antiquities, except that they should be brought to bear more directly on the objects intended by their arrangement and exposition. The fee-simple of a single bishopric, which might well be spared, would amply suffice for the establishment of such an institution as this, and render it effective for its purposes, in a way hitherto unprecedented in the history of scripture illustration. There might be models such as have been constructed of Switzerland and other countries—models on a large scale of the Holy Land; there might its valleys spread, its mountains rise, its rivers flow, so as to give the eye some notion of the nature of the region, and its distribution of rock and torrent and valley, and lovely gardens and cornfields, and make these as present to the mind as the scenes of our own country with which we are familiar. There might the various animals mentioned in scripture be preserved and shown. "The wild gazelle on Judah's hills" might there "exulting bound." There might be exhibitions of costume, of the priestly or royal robes then worn; Jewish buildings might be imitated—their walls and towers and temple reared again, and the pomp of procession and sacrifice displayed; so that chapter and verses expressing these things would not pass before the eye as lifeless, unmeaning, sounding words, the mere corpses and relics of past vitality, but might bring with them what they conveyed to the contemporary readers to whom they were addressed—might call before us the lifelike images of scenes so distant, of times so long gone by, but yet in which our interest is so close and so intense.

The *morale* as well as the *physique* of these times and principles should be realised, if we would understand the scriptures: and this is no easy task. How many arts have been since invented, how many social arrangements have since been established, which have to be thrown out of our minds when we read of a state of society in which they not only did not exist, but in which there was not even the most distant anticipation of them! and as these are discarded from the mind, how much is there strange and foreign to introduce into their place—how many modes of

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thought to be realised which have never passed through our own minds, and of which we can with difficulty entertain the conception! and it is only as we do this, that we imbibe what was really meant to be conveyed by the writers of these works.

Perhaps a good way for persons to excite the sluggishness of the imagination is to divest an event of its connection with the scriptures; to look at it as if it were happening now, and see the impression it would make on our minds. Suppose a traveller from India to arrive, and tell us that in the remotest corner of our great oriental empire there was a single individual, who had attracted considerable attention—who, born of some Brahminical or other high caste, had renounced the privileges of caste altogether; that he had abandoned his native city, notwithstanding the influence he might have exercised over its inhabitants, and the power he might have attained; that he had taken to a wandering life, and dwelt in the fields,—he and his retinue only living in tents, and never erecting for themselves any permanent abode; that his wealth consisted chiefly of flocks and herds, of which he had an immense number, and that the desire of finding sufficient pasture seemed to be the only principle by which his ramblings were guided; that he had at least a thousand slaves in his household, on whom he had imposed a new religion, unknown to his countrymen; that of these, several hundreds were armed; that when he left the broad rivers, he had occasional quarrels with the inhabitants for the possession of springs or wells; that he sometimes led his followers forth in more decided warfare, fighting and winning battles; that of his religion little could be known, as he did not go about proselyting others, but that he had been detected holding a knife, by order of the Deity, as he said, to the throat of his son, who lay stretched on a pile of wood, bound hand and foot, and whom he at last desisted from killing in conformity with a second divine command; that he also professed to have conversation with spiritual beings; that, before it actually happened, he announced that fire from heaven would consume several cities; and that, not possessing a single foot of ground, except a burial-place, he yet laid claim to an extent of country which he declared his posterity should inhabit, although peopled and

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settled by powerful tribes. Such an account would certainly excite a variety of speculations. Some portions of it would be spoken of in one way, other portions would be thought and spoken of in another way. There would be a vast variety of contradictory opinions, and, certainly, none of that conventional agreement and that professed verbal reverence with which this is read when people unthinkingly turn over the pages of the history of the patriarch Abraham.

Not only the faculties of our mind by which we realise that which is not presented to our senses, but also those by which we arrange, compare, and decide, should be called into action in reading the scriptures. They should be read chronologically, as well as imaginatively: and to the chronological study of the scriptures—I mean the study of the books in the order in which they were written, and with reference to the dates of their production, and of the state of society and of opinion at those times—very considerable importance attaches. For instance, if this be done, we may trace very distinctly the growth of man's conception of the Deity. We may trace this merely by looking at the names of the Deity which are employed by the writers of the Old Testament. The first word in use, for instance, Elohim, although translated God, and thus confused with other words which are translated by the same term in works of a subsequent period, is plural. It shows that the first chapter of Genesis, in which it is used, was written at a time when the notions of polytheism were by no means worn out—when they were fresh and strong, if not predominant and popular—when the writer could not venture on so wide a departure from the common phraseology as to name the Deity by a word expressive of his unity and of the singularity of his nature and of his power. It is an advance upon this when we find the term Jehovah. There, *one* Being is distinctly pointed out to our apprehension. But if we look at the connection in which this word is used in the Old Testament, we shall perceive that it was far from designating such a being as was known in after times, or as is known to us, under the appellation of God. We find the word Jehovah usually describing the family God of the patriarchs—the national God of the Jews; a being whose residence was in heaven, but whose

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peculiar care was over a small portion of the earth; a being from whose presence a prophet might attempt to fly: and the record of this endeavour in the book of Jonah marks, perhaps, more distinctly than any other work, the time when the Jews emerged from the notion of nationality towards that of universality in their conception of the providence of God.

The term Jehovah is modified into the term "Jehovah of hosts"—"the Lord of hosts." This is confined to a particular period; it does not obtain in the age of the patriarchs, or in the time of the theocracy, nor is it prolonged into a later period of the Christian era; it marks the time when Judæa was regal and military; when arms and battles had risen in importance upon men's minds; when glory in scenes of conflict was the object of aspiring and ambitious thoughts; when there was that influence over the general state of the community, and over the expressions of its religious teachers, which is usually found associated with the pomp of monarchy and with the endeavour to carry on successive wars, for purposes whether of glory or of conquest. After this period we find the term God comes into use in the sense analogous to that entertained by the philosophers of the East and by the Greeks, whose language began to be familiarly used by a large portion of the Jews. The rational, philosophical, monotheistical conception of the Deity was now making its way in the world. It was making its way rapidly among the Jews, and superseding the notion of a tutelary family and national God. A better conception of the Divine attributes began to prevail. Wrath, fury, jealousy, vindictiveness, were not so commonly ascribed to the Governor of the world as they had been; while the better qualities, such as benevolence, benignity, were rising, until they attained their zenith in the Christian conjunction of Father with the name of God, extending in its amplification to the whole human race, combining them all in the bonds of brotherhood, as children of the Universal Parent, and giving a conception of God so lovely, pure, and beneficent as to gain that sway which it has exercised over devout minds to the present time, and which, with its expanding power, it is capable of exercising over enlightened minds through all the progress of human reason.

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The morality of the scriptures may be observed, in like manner, making gradual advance, so that there is a strong contrast between its embodiments in the Jewish code and in the instructions of Christ—a contrast between the implicit obedience to a direct precept required in the one case, and the enlightened individual application of universal principles which is directed in the other—between the external forms and actions which were enjoined by the old code, and the spiritual morality, the reference to inward thoughts, feelings, and emotions, which are the subjects of contemplation in the new commandment—between the vindictiveness which is to be found mixed with the one, and the mercy, pity, and benevolence by which the other is pervaded—and between the altogether national spirit of the Jewish morality, and that universal fraternity which appeals to our sympathy, and constitutes the standard and guidance of Christianity. Now, in all this record—in this chronological development of the ideas of God and of morality—are we not to be observant of the order in which it took place? are we not to mark whatever was pure and true in the first and most imperfect conception of the Deity, that remained, grew, expanded, and harmonised with whatever new thought was obtained upon the subject?

To say that we are not thus to discriminate, to say that we are not thus to reason, is at once to abrogate the charter which the Author of man's spirit has bestowed upon him by the very fact of his rational endowment,—it is to oppose the whole spirit and tendency of the scriptures, which, in recording such progress, invite us to mark its gradations, and which, in doing so, have not endeavoured to supersede reason, but to stimulate its use, and, by the record of its past advances, to furnish a guarantee for its future continuance. To mix up all the several ideas which succeeded one another in ages so distant, would be to produce an incongruity worse than that of the Athanasian Creed itself, and would make greater havoc with the moral conception of God than that does with the delineation of his nature. When thus contemplated, the order of the scriptures, the way in which they are adjusted to one another, so as to have unity of influence, so as to be harmonised in their different bearings on the minds by which they are contemplated, will rise upon us, as the Divine attributes rise upon

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us in the contemplation of nature; through the one, as through the other, we shall look up to the God of nature as the object of religious and Christian homage—shall recognise that in him which endows him with peerless excellence, and feel in our own souls corresponding emotions of devout and filial reverence.

And not only is there a state of mind which is thus appropriate to the entire scriptures, but there is also an appropriate state for the several portions; and, whatever may be the frame of our thought, it may there meet with something tending to harmonise therewith, or to counteract it. It would not be likely to lead to a good result to apply any portion of the scriptures indiscriminately to any state of mind. We should seek for food appropriate to the time, as we should seek for different kinds of scenery, according to the varying state of our feelings, whether it were for the artificial garden or for the free and open field,—or as we take different books, according to our different moods, varying through all ages—sometimes pleased with the garrulity of Montaigne, at others better suited with the perspicuity of Paley,—or as we apply ourselves to the mechanical exertions of daily business, or the excitement of political collisions, or the social ceremonials of religion;—so, whatever our state, in the scriptures we may find that which belongs to each condition, which harmonises with it, or which tends to correct and purify and elevate it,—and they therefore seem intended by Providence for that purpose, as the different fruits of the earth are prepared for the sustentation of man's physical condition.

In almost all conditions of acute feeling, the scriptures, in their rich variety of meaning, furnish that which may calm or which may excite—which may lead to the deep exclamation of the writer, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? trust thou in God;" or in its most vehement state that soul may find in some of these compositions a vehemence which will, as it were, overbear its own; and the bigot may lose some of his bigoted zeal for what he deems the glory of God, by entering, for a moment, into the violent, but different, emotions of Jewish zeal when it exclaimed, "Do not I hate them, O God, that hate thee? yea, I hate them with a perfect hatred, and count them

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mine enemies." The diversities of the historical books furnish every variety which the mind can desire, when it is in a state to be impressed with the contemplation of individual excellence or individual adventure; or when it would look at a grand march of events, like the days of creation succeeding one another in their order until, the different forms of material arrangement and vegetable and animal and human life being completed, the Divine power is represented as resting from its labours; or in that state of reverie which, disregarding the incongruity of imaginative scenes, dwells on those of the Apocalypse, with its pictures of the mystic rolls becoming animated as they are exposed to view, and going forth with the functions of life and action,—or its angels, with one foot on the sea and one foot on the dry land, with arms of brass and eyes of flame, and hands at whose upraising the thunders utter their voices; or, in that state when questions occur to the mind, it may look to the deep, reflective, overpowering gloom of the writer who exclaimed that "All is vanity," and by the very gloom of those views, by the depth of their tinge, may have its own corrected and brightened, and may be impelled, by a revulsion of feeling, towards those other views of man and Providence and futurity which are full of bright expectancy; or, in its best and simplest and purest state, it may lead the individual to sit at his feet "who spake as never man spake," whose words were spirit and life, whose parables lay their eternal grasp upon the emotions of the human heart, which belong to our being, the same in their truth, their beauty, and their power over all countries and through all generations: and from these, and from the simple precepts of his morality, may learn what is man's nature, duty, and destiny here on earth, or in the world beyond the grave. As it is said of Providence, watching over the animated creation, that it giveth to every one his meat in due season, so may the scriptures furnish to every varying state of human thought and feeling that which tends to enlighten the thoughts, to elevate the feelings, and to bring man nearer to his God. And in such reading of the scriptures the spirit of God is in them, brooding over the moral life which thus arises, as it did originally, over the wild waste of waters, from which the earth emerged, in its beauty and order, to become the

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support of life and the theatre of action; or as it will brood when the progress of knowledge, of justice, of wisdom, and of benevolence towards perfection shall have changed the face of society, and the moral creation shall arise—the new heaven and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

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ON THE DOCTRINE THAT THE GLORY OF GOD IS THE RULE OF HUMAN ACTION.

January 27th, 1838.

THE subject on which I intend briefly to lecture this morning is the common theological doctrine of the glory of God as the rule or principle of human action.

Theology, which claims to be a science by the derivation of that very term, is the most daring of all sciences. It is so, whether we consider the infinity of the Deity who is its object, or the limited faculties and opportunities of man who claims to be the agent of discussing that object and of displaying its attributes in a scientific form. Almost all pursuits of knowledge have something in them of a bold and daring character: at least, there are points of view from which they give us that impression. The chemist and the electrician would, to one who was not familiarised with their studies, appear to be daring speculators or inquirers. When they discuss the properties of substances which are alike invisible and intangible—when they deal with powers which, if their calculations be mistaken or their experiments misdirected, may in a moment level the unwary experimentalist with the unconscious dust—when they act upon elements which are universally diffused, though not the objects of sense—when they compel them to become so—or when, with a simple apparatus, they draw down the very lightning from the clouds,—who but sees in all this an exhibition of human boldness which only our familiarity with such experiments leads us to disregard? And is not the astronomer bold? He measures the orbits of globes at such an immense distance that they are mere luminous points to us—he calculates the weight of celestial bodies to which our world itself is but dust in the scale—he measures the speed of light—

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he traces in every direction the operations of a Power which, extending itself to the incomprehensibly large, seems also concentrated upon the incomprehensibly small; and, dealing with quantities like these, he reduces all to forms of exact calculation, and presents before us the results, wrought out almost with the simplicity of the common arithmetical lesson of the schoolboy.

The mental sciences bear yet more this character. There man deals with objects more subtle and impalpable, more fine and evanescent, than those which belong even to the elements of chemistry or electricity, or to the tenuity of light itself. There he reduces thought under laws—he traces the connection of cause and effect as it operates through the agency of intelligence—he finds in that which was long supposed to baffle all calculation, traces of system and order, from which he even dares to predict the future of men's thoughts, conditions, and actions. Truly in all this there is much which, were the subject strange to us, would strike us with wonder at the daring of the mind that should attempt to deal with it. But what are all these—what is the analysis of any objects subjected to human experiments and observations—to the science of Deity? or what is there to compare in boldness, justified by the exactitude of result that is to be met with in these sciences, to that which pretends, as it were, to anatomise the nature of infinity—to distribute the Deity into personalities—to marshal in order and by classification the attributes of the incomprehensible—and to erect into a science the little knowledge which creatures such as we can possibly obtain of that Power by which universal being is created? And yet those who make this assumption, those who exercise this boldness, to which all other daring science is but prudence itself, are generally the most ready to praise humility, and to rebuke what they call the pride of reason in those who pursue the safe path of palpable experiment.

It is not thus, I apprehend, that men should think of God. Deity is not an object of human science. It does not become us to be distributing what can be learnt of him into propositions and dogmas, to be enforced upon the credence of mankind; but, in all lowliness and carefulness of spirit, to be ever trying to acquire more knowledge of him, letting that knowledge operate upon our minds according to

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its proper nature and tendency. We may learn something of God from all the means and sources of human information upon any subject whatever: for what are all, but his works? We may trace him in the extraordinary records of the Jewish scriptures—we may find him also in the annals of heathen nations—we may see him in the history of humanity—we may behold his spirit in the laws of the material universe—we may admire his grandeur in the universe of mind: from all, we gain something; and we reap that knowledge which best accords with the limited powers and opportunities of humanity.

The glory or praise of God is continually held forth as the object to which human exertion should be consciously directed—as that to promote which man was created—as that by which his actions should be regulated. And most true it is that the apostles adopted this view, and enjoined it on their followers as a rule of action to be observed. But if we look at the way in which the Apostle Paul speaks in the most definite passage on the subject, we shall find that he had two things practically in view. When he told them that, whether they ate or drank, or whatever they did, they should do all to the glory of God, his purpose was chiefly directed towards their abstinence from practices of Gentile idolatry, and against the intolerance they manifested in enforcing the observance of days, of fasts and festivals, upon one another. The occasion of the first of these applications has perhaps in some measure passed away with the disappearance from the earth—from the most civilised and enlightened portion of it, at least—of that authority or compulsion against which he directed his precepts. But many there are who talk of living to the glory of God, who have yet to learn that it is best done, not by enforcing one's own faith on the credence of others—not by enforcing ceremonies on the observance of others—not by setting up one's own views as the standard for others—but by recognising the equal rights of all, and by pursuing our own course in peace, trusting that they, doing the same, may arrive with us at an harmonious result.

No doubt this maxim or injunction of the apostle has its truth, its force, and its obligation; but much must depend on the interpretation. Wherever tenets of morality and of religion are comprised in verbal summaries, there every thing

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must depend on the rationality of the exposition: and thus what at first leads men away from real knowledge—what at first tends to alienate them from objective knowledge, and leads them to rest in external and unmeaning expressions—at last, by requiring interpretation, and thus restoring reason to its rightful authority, corrects its own evil, and leads them onward in acquaintance with what it most concerns them to know.

The praise or glory of God implies some standard of excellence in the mind, something on which the ascription of praise or glory is to be founded; for how can we praise or glorify God, but on the assumption that we have traced somewhat of his conduct and character, and that they correspond with our notions, previously formed, of that which constitutes moral excellence? There must therefore be a moral philosophy at the basis even of a religion which inculcates that the glory of God should be the object of human exertion. Without this, the mind is quite at sea: making praise where there should be dispraise—or making glory of that which should be disgrace. That alone is praiseworthy and glorious which tends to the multiplication of happiness: that can never be praiseworthy or glorious which tends to the diminution of happiness and to the production of misery. And there is something of this element of moral philosophy so interwoven with our nature that almost all feel its influence. The very dictates of our constitution impel us towards it; the opinion of society to a certain extent confirms it; the results of experience yet further enforce it: and accordingly there is, almost coextensive with human nature, the outline—rough and rude it may be, but the outline still—of the system of moral philosophy, which must be made the basis of praise and glory, as they are bestowed on man, or ascribed to the Deity: and we owe it to this elemental knowledge, that superstition and humanity have so often been at war; and when theological speculation has run wild, and when, under the notion or name of divinity, delineations of the Deity are put forth that are inconsistent with all that is really excellent, there is a reaction in the common human heart, and a conflict set up between humanity and theology, of which the theologian has often bitterly complained, and in which he has found his imaginary demonstration of human depravity; while in reality the corruption he attributed

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to man's nature arose from his own error and his own presumption.

Glory to God! says the theologian; he saves men by his own eternal and arbitrary decree. Regarding the whole human race as alike involved in guilt and misery, he has selected a certain number, from no regard to their better nature, from no regard to their higher cultivation of that nature, from no regard to their character or to their deeds,—but of his own sovereign free will and pleasure he has chosen them, and made them the certain heirs of everlasting happiness, while the rest are reprobated or passed over. Humanity replies: I can give no glory to God on any such account; I cannot see in this the traces of that which constitutes the very foundation of praise or glory in any instance: it violates the very simplest dictates of the nature with which God has endowed me. Were a sovereign on his accession thus to distribute honours among the people over whom he was called to reign—were he to select, from the millions who bow beneath his sceptre, certain hundreds or thousands, not distinguished by any mental superiority, not distinguished by any moral superiority, with nothing whatever to recommend them to his notice but his own arbitrary prerogative in their selection and elevation—he would not reign in the minds of his people, he would not reign in the hearts of his people: it would only be by the superiority of brute force that he could be long acknowledged by them externally as sovereign; the exercise of such a prerogative would produce mental rebellion, and insurgent morality would vindicate the rights of humanity, and indicate where true glory is to be found.

Glory to God! says the theologian; my sins have had full satisfaction made for them in the person of his incarnate Son—my guilt was transferred to him—his righteousness is transferred to me—by this imputation, he was condemned in the courts of heaven, and I am acquitted in the courts of heaven—and thus are the honours of God's law sustained, and his justice is splendidly exhibited to the world, and to all worlds. Humanity again responds: I can give no glory; I can perceive no conformity with the simplest dictates of justice, which, resolvable into benevolence, seeks only the well-being of humanity and the greatest good of the whole; I can perceive no conformity with that, in dealing with the

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innocent as though he were the guilty, or dealing with the guilty as though he were the innocent: it violates all notions of justice—it tramples down all propriety of distribution—it inflicts pain where pain can bring none of the legitimate consequences of punishment—where there is no occasion for those consequences—where there is nothing to be purified away—and where the example to others is not the example of suffering and corrected guilt, but of innocence enduring that which cannot make it more innocent, or raise it higher in the scale of moral being. There has sometimes been a traditionary story from antiquity brought forward to illustrate this extraordinary doctrine. It is told of some monarch in barbarian times—and a barbarian nation it certainly must have been—who enacted the loss of both eyes against the perpetrators of a certain offence. His own son was found guilty of that offence, and he maintained the strictness of the law, upheld justice, and yet gratified his own paternal feeling, by putting out one of his son's eyes and one of his own. If any thing could show the infatuation in which theological dogmas can bind men's minds, it is that they should find any thing of moral good in this analogy which is brought forward to illustrate the Divine procedure; for the absurdity and injustice of it were about equal: the law was not honoured; full punishment was not inflicted on the offending son, as the full punishment of sin could not be inflicted on the unoffending Son of God, according to the doctrine of atonement. The example was not one to produce a proper impression of the law: there could be no reason why others might not claim a similar immunity for their parental feelings; and had the offence multiplied, and the plan of vicariousness been followed, the community subject to such a sovereign might have been merely a one-eyed nation—their physical state typifying the condition of their intellectual and moral faculties.

Glory to God! says the theologian; he will distribute men eventually into two portions, raising one portion to a state of eternal happiness, and magnifying his justice by assigning the rest to an intolerable, and yet never-ending, state of misery. Humanity replies: Here is no praise, here is no glory. I should not praise the workman who, fashioning a variety of articles for use or ornament, with great skill, care, and perseverance, should, when he had

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made them, consign a certain portion of them, and those perhaps of the best materials and the best patterns, to the flames; and still less should I praise him if these his works, being endowed with consciousness, could have that consciousness preserved and perpetuated by his power, simply that they might feel the flames until they were entirely consumed; and still less than this could I trace the accordance of his conduct with the dictates of morality, as that which conduces to the happiness of sentient being, if he, previously determining their existence, did perpetuate their consciousness to become a perpetuity of torment. We should trace here nothing to honour; nor can we regard with approval the conduct of a Deity who is described as thus dealing with the works of his own hands.

In all these, and in many similar instances, we see the vanity of theology—and would that vanity were the worst appellation appropriate to it! The notions entertained of Divine glory in the doctrine of redemption have left their traces of mischief, both direct and indirect, broad and deep in the annals of humanity. What absurdity, what mischief, what anti-social, what anti-human mode of conduct, has not connected itself with the idea of promoting Divine glory! The monk alienated himself from the duties which belong to his kind—he fled the society of his fellows—he abstained from the enjoyments with which Nature had surrounded him, and of which Nature invited him to partake—he laid the lash on his bare back through the day, and had only the cold stone for his couch at night—he became a member of an isolated class, with an interest distinct from that of the human beings among whom he lived and dwelt, and to whom he should, had he consulted the dictates of true morality, have been rendering his best services. Or perhaps, like some of the saints of old, his enthusiasm ended in passing years upon a pillar, as if he could honour God by transforming flesh and blood, the intellect and feeling and soul of man, into a mere statue,—thus becoming his own monument. And this was done for the glory of God. Here the individuals themselves were the chief sufferers. In the crusades, such as those undertaken against the possessors of Palestine, or such as those yet more ferocious wars undertaken against heresy in the persons of the Albigenses and the Waldenses, we trace a worse

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development of the same principle, and behold rapine and desolation spread far and wide among those who had the most claim to man's respect from their innocence, to his reverence from their benevolence; and all this was done under the notion of giving glory to God. And when the Protestants took their turn in the world, the glory of God was promoted by penal laws against the religion from which they were dissenters; civil rights were taken away; direct obligations were enforced, under the penalties of pecuniary forfeiture, or of the dungeon, to recognise the established faith, and accept its ceremonies. To celebrate divine worship according to the mode which even yet prevails with the majority of nominal Christendom has been made, in Protestant states, to constitute an act of felony; and whole nations have been made to groan under the burden of establishments that pressed them down to the dust, in honour of the glory of God! The poison spreads through society, mingles with individual feelings, separates those whom nature or friendship has bound together, sets one against another, introduces censoriousness, that, instead of trying character by action, tries both character and action by theological dogma—thus shutting men out from the fair prospects which would have been opened before them of gaining their proper position in the world, and exercising useful influence over their fellow-creatures, and converting the common sources of enjoyment, which God and nature have set before us, into occasions only of bitterness, of recrimination, and of a mutual production of accusation and of suffering.

Such have been many of the direct acts of false theology; the indirect have borne a similar character. This notion of glory has undergone correction, the slow but continuous correction of the world. The false glitter that imposed on poets or historians, on legislators or philosophers, in early times, has gradually become divested of much of its influence. The Cæsars of history have been doomed to have their fame become fainter and fainter; while that of its Alfreds has waxed brighter and brighter. The diffusion of the elements, at least, of a sounder moral philosophy has led to one correction after another, until, though opinion be yet far from acting in the way best calculated to promote human happiness, it has made approximations which we

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regard as a pledge of still closer approximations to come. But little has theology helped in this process. Its influence has generally been found linked with powers which tended to keep things as they were, or even to make them retrograde, rather than advance with the progression of opinion and of intellect. When a bloody battle has been fought—when fields have been strewed with mangled and dead bodies—when the very waters of the ocean have received the tinge and stain of human blood—when thousands have been deprived of life for the sake of some paltry object of individual ambition, or of national jealousy, or of commercial cupidity,—theology, instead of reproving the glaring and enormous vice, instead of judging it according to the dictates of enlightened morality, has linked it with its own corruptions, and declared that "Almighty God hath blessed his majesty's arms—glory to God!" When tyranny has been abroad—when one popular right after another has been crushed—when liberty after liberty has yielded before the insidious or forceful advances of a power that was determined to absorb all things into itself,—theology has seldom commenced any practical attempt at resistance to the fraud and violence which were thus destroying human happiness; it has stood by in sullen neutrality, declaring it had nothing to do with politics, or else taken up its position in favour of the few against the many, and preached: "Render obedience to the powers that be, and so give glory to God." And when warfare has been waged against human opinion and human right—when nation after nation has been banded together in order to put down those who, by gigantic efforts, had broken the fetters by which for ages their limbs had been encircled—when the voice, the Christian voice, of human equality has been heard in the earth, declaring, "All we are brethren; deal with one another as brethren,"—then, when banded myriads have been called forth to destroy this spirit, and to counteract this Christian principle,—theology, instead of supporting truth, morality, and Christianity, has given its benediction to tyranny, under pretence of sustaining the altar and the throne, and thus rendering glory to God.

Does the principle, then, never act well? is there nothing in it of good as well as of mischief? is there no tendency to the true and the right as well as to the false and

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the wrong? Assuredly there is; and exactly in proportion as it is connected with a real knowledge of the Deity, as he only can be known to us, in his actual dealing with ourselves and others,—and whenever God is glorified on this principle,—we find that, instead of such praise or glory passing away as intelligence advances, it grows brighter and brighter in proportion to the clearness and comprehension of the intelligence. I would just refer to three scripture instances where this process takes place, the reverse of that which I have just placed before you.

The psalmist praises God in the name of the heavens and of the earth, of his material universe, of his celestial ordinances. He says: "The heavens declare the glory of God, the firmament showeth his handiwork." He interprets that voice which to the ear of wisdom is audible throughout nature, and which peals from every star, whatever its magnitude or its remoteness. And has that voice died away in the long lapse of intervening ages?—is that voice less audible now, or does it fall with less force upon the heart of man with its heavenly harmony, as it has been ascertained what these bodies are—as their magnitudes have been discovered—as their movements have been described —as the beams of their light have been analysed — as more and more discovery has been made of the extent of creation,—showing that we are only, as it were, in one remote corner of God's incomprehensible universe? The language of the psalmist has meant correspondingly more, as the truth of science has flowed in upon it to give more meaning and strength to the phrase; for as declared in the heavens and on the earth, as founded on the truth of science and human knowledge, God's glory is ever growing and magnifying. The same writer says: "I will praise thee, O God, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made." Here, too, as man is better known to himself—as the faculties of his physical and mental constitution, their nature, their variety, and their power, are developed—as he traces their fitness to achieve the happiness towards which he aspires—as he considers the power of his own constitution, and the different relations by which he is bound to society,—he discovers yet more of the means by which happiness is to be achieved, and of the identification of his own happiness with the promotion of the good of others; just in that

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proportion does he feel God's glory in his own construction, in that he is not only "fearfully and wonderfully," but also wisely and beneficently, made.

Christ glorified God in his own mission to humanity, and thus will His glory ever become brighter with the increase of human knowledge, with the more distinct conception of the real principles of human morality. For what was it by which God was glorified in Christ? It was that spiritual truth which was taught by the Galilean peasant in its simplicity, its power, and beauty, and which, coming from his heart, forced its way resistlessly to the hearts of others—it was in the fact that future nations were to look back for spiritual lessons, not to one invested with the attributes of external splendour, not to one trained in endowed schools which nations establish, not to one gifted with legislative or regal power,—but to one who moved on the earth as a man amongst men, whose regality consisted in this, that he felt he was the brother of mankind, who assumed as his most dignified title that of "Son of Man," and who taught that all men were brethren. God was glorified by Christ in this, inasmuch as all the common conventional notions of glory and disgrace were here reversed and trampled on. Christ was glorifying God in expiring on the cross—the death of the slave and the malefactor. Men were taught not to shrink or cringe in the prospect of suffering, or even of dishonour: and that which had been the badge of servility, of slavery, of guilt, became the object of universal homage, and commanded men's reverence, in testimony to the triumph of truth over falsehood, whatever might be the obloquy with which it was temporarily covered. And in proportion as we estimate all things by their tendency to augment the sum of human happiness, must we recognise Christianity as conducive to the glory of God.

It is a childish and partially immoral notion of theologians, that God acts with constant regard to his own glory. In classing the motives by which human nature is actuated, certainly the love of praise, reputation, or glory, cannot claim the highest place. It does not correspond invariably and infallibly with the dictates of that morality which finds its end in the multiplication of happiness. It will often fall short of this. It is an impulse of an inferior class to benevolence, which endeavours to realise good in all, from

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its simple delight in the contemplation of good. It is the love of good that is God's moving principle, and no desire of glory, which must to him be altogether vain and worthless. And in proportion as glory is a legitimate object, it must ever be tested by that which I have described as the great principle of morality. Only in consistency with this can it escape from the imputation of imperfection. As far as it goes with this, it is inferior to the principle of benevolence, and only tolerated from the coincidence of its tendency. In this view let us regard it, and ever make it subordinate to that benevolence which, in proportion to its intelligence, points towards the production and multiplication of human happiness: for we may be assured that whenever we learn any thing more of the bearing of human conduct upon human enjoyment—whenever we gain fresh light as to the connection in morals of cause and effect, and of the influences which particular lines of conduct may exercise upon our own character and happiness, and the character and happiness of others,—whenever we do this, we glorify God. Whenever we acquire more acquaintance with the principles of Providence, trace more of the action of the material agents of the universe in their diversified influences, or see more luminously along the pages of history the direction in which events have been flowing, and the objects towards which they tend, we then render glory to God in the most acceptable manner. As we communicate knowledge to the ignorant—as we dispel the errors of the prejudiced—as we lead men through mists and darkness and twilight to the perception of their own good and of the good of others, and to those large views in which right is established, and temporary expediency brought to its due subordination thereto,—we glorify God. And in every thing by which man's condition is advanced—by which men are raised in the capacities and opportunities that they possess for enjoyment—by which the improvement of society is facilitated—by which, while humanity in the aggregate is benefited, individual character is exalted also,—in proportion as wisdom is learnt from the past, and improvement is prepared for in futurity,—in that proportion is God glorified; for his glory is incapable of being dissevered from the happiness of his creatures.

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THE SECOND AND THIRD CHAPTERS OF GENESIS.

No. I.

May 13*th*, 1838.

THE subject of this morning's lecture is expository of the second and third chapters of the book of Genesis, containing what theologians call the doctrine of the fall of man—containing what rational students of the scriptures regard as the mythos of Adam, Eve, and the serpent. In a previous expository lecture on the first chapter up to the third verse, I explained to you my notion of the separate and independent nature of the documents which are put together to constitute the commencement of the book of Genesis. They have every indication of being entirely independent documents, by different writers, of different ages, and they are to a certain extent written on different principles. The most remarkable and obvious distinction between them is that which we find in their use of the name of the Deity. In the first theory of creation, in which it is represented in a summary mode, the name employed for Deity is of the plural form—"Elohim," or "Gods"—but is connected with singular verbs and adjectives; thereby indicating an effort on the part of the writer to lead men from the language of polytheism to language consistent with the oneness of the divine Object of worship and the Creator of the world. The composition which commences with the fourth verse of the second chapter, and which has its regular title—"These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth"—a form of expression which designates a distinct and independent work as completely as does the modern use of titles—combines the name of "Elohim" or "Gods" with the personal appellation, "Jehovah," which was peculiarly the Hebrew name of the Deity. In the composition which precedes the history of Cain and Abel, and which begins with the fourth chapter, we find the old phrase "Elohim" dropt entirely.

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The combination of the two is no longer made, and the term "Jehovah" stands alone; indicating an advance towards that theology which was enshrined in the Mosaic institutions. The transition seems then to have been regarded as complete by the writers who followed each other in this effort to make language accord with what were then the thoughts of the most enlightened persons. The only exceptions to the use of the terms of "Jehovah Elohim," known in our English translation by the words "Lord God," are in the dialogue between Eve and the serpent, where there is a recurrence to the older phrase rendered "God," but which, in the original, is in the plural—"Elohim" or "Gods;" and in this exception there is an illustration of the object of the writer; for in what is called the temptation, he makes the parties use the language of idolatry—language which he wished to brand with the stigma of falsehood, if not of criminality. There is, therefore, much propriety in the exception—it tended as much to the object which he contemplated as did the general rule upon which he acted.

From the fourth verse of the second chapter to the end of the third chapter, we have, I imagine, an independent work, which has descended to us from the remotest antiquity. It has many marks of not being the composition of Moses, but of having been in existence before his time, and of having been taken by him, together with the other account of the creation, and the narrative of Cain and Abel, and of the flood, and of the patriarchs, as an appropriate introduction to the code of laws which he bestowed upon the Israelites. Of course, it must ever remain in doubt; but although we know not, in the common sense of the phrase, who the author was, yet there is much about his work, notwithstanding its obscurities, to impress us with a high notion of the elevation and capacity of his intellect. He was a man who—though his theology was very inferior to that of the Christian, or, perhaps, to that of the better times of the Jewish thought—yet departed widely from the current superstitions of his day. He was a man who did not bow the knee to the multitudinous gods that had already established themselves in the mythology of Egypt. He was a man not content with having purer views himself, but who endeavoured, though he adopted the mythological or

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allegorical form, to communicate them to others, and especially to keep the Israelitish people pure from the pollution of the worship of those among whom, for a time, they were made to sojourn. He was a man whose mind was Israelitish in its constitution, though it had evidently been Egyptian in its training; for many of its figures are derived from Egyptian learning, and he could only have been led to their use by familiarity with the philosophy and the theology that were inculcated or possessed by the priests of Egypt. He was a man who was in advance of his age morally as well as theologically—who had views concerning the identity of the origin of the entire human race, and the singleness and sacredness of marriage, which were far beyond those of the Hebrew patriarchs even, which it required hundreds and thousands of years to cause to obtain recognition in Eastern countries, and which, to a certain extent, were anticipations of Christianity at a distance of more than twenty centuries. He was a man who felt deeply the depressing condition of his country. There is a gloominess of spirit, there is a depth of emotion, as he contemplates the world as the scene of toil where man is to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow, which belongs to the season of Israelitish slavery in Egypt—which shows how strongly the writer's mind was penetrated by the impression of the sufferings that surrounded him; and yet in this there are also indications of hope, anticipations of futurity, a rejoicing in the blessings often spoken of by him, only to be accomplished after long ages had elapsed, which show that he was not a mere mourner, but one who, perceiving the working of the present state of things, yet could look through these apparent aberrations from the great plan, and see it rolling on through a long course of ages, and at length arriving at its destined point in brightness and in gladness.

It is something impressive now, after the lapse of five thousand years, with his name and every other external designation unknown, to find ourselves in the presence, as it were, of such a mind—to be in communion with a nameless one who has passed away long ages since from the face of the earth, —to find after what his spirit was groping, with what it was conflicting,—what advances he had made, and what others he seemed to have a dim perception of, though unable to plant his foot firmly any further in the path,—and

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to behold him endeavouring to solve that great enigma which has occupied the contemplation of the greatest minds through all the successive generations of the earth's advances. For what is the topic of this mythos, with which every man whose soul has been upraised above his time and country has still endeavoured to grapple? The same that perplexed the author of the most ancient drama in existence, the book of Job—the plot of that play—the mystery which the writer of it endeavoured to unravel, for which he introduced the extraordinary machinery of his introduction, and for which he penned every argument and varied passion of his dialogue. The same which oppressed the mind of Solomon in the midst of all his power and grandeur, his luxury and his wisdom, and which wrung from him the deep and thrilling strains of the book of Ecclesiastes. The same which in Greece called forth the speculations of Plato, and led him, in the search for the solution of the mysteries of the present, to look back to the past as well as forward to the future, and to imagine the preëxistence as well as the immortality of the soul of man. The same which led Paul —with that mind which was so wonderfully compounded of rabbinical and of scriptural learning, of Hebrew and of Greek literature, of the theology of his ancestors and the philosophical speculations of his contemporaries—to put together the views contained in his epistle to the Romans, recording thereby his own attempts at a solution of the mystery, and plunging those who interpreted word by word what he wrote into mysteries as dark, and, to their minds at least, as interminable. The same enigma which led the wiser men of the middle ages to draw on themselves the reputation, or it might be frequently the reprobation, of magic and sorcery and of dealing with inhibited rites—the multitude mistaking their efforts to penetrate into the arcana of nature for a league with the principles of darkness. The same enigma as that contemplated by the author of *Faust;*—the same, in short, as that of which every mind, not content to rest altogether in the ignorant present—not content to have its speculations confined within the narrow sphere of the observation of its sense—has ever endeavoured to wring from the principles of nature or from the faculties of the mind something like a solution; and, still pressing onward, has shown that while an eternal

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weight was upon the human soul, there was also an eternal power in it to struggle with the burden.

These efforts, in all their diversified character, belong to the same class as the work through which I am about to lead you in this and in the ensuing lecture. And how different are these speculations which we imagine the author to have pursued,—how different from the babbling of the theologians, who have felt no doubts, and, setting up their own standard of literal and dogmatic interpretation, have found here the germ of a theology and of a doctrine which is to explain every thing, which is to reconcile the ways of God to man, which is to be received in trust upon their authority as expositors, and which then is to give us the comfortable assurance of immortality, of heaven, of boundless enjoyment,—leaving a large portion of the world in worse darkness than that from which it attempts to extricate us, because the darkness of ignorance is, after all, nothing to the profound of the abyss of everlasting torment. Babblers indeed have they been; for what have not been the tricks and contrivances by which these chapters have been wrested in their verbal interpretation from any thing like sense! Theologians have shut their eyes to the discrepancy between the second account of the creation and that which precedes it,—its regular advancement in the one, and the instantaneous formation which is described in the other which is before us. They have overlooked all incongruities, that they might identify both with the plenary authority of verbal inspiration. They have contended for a literal interpretation, in defiance of all consistency even with the laws of nature, or the enduring facts of natural history; and yet, from this they have departed into allegory, without any principle to guide the interpretation, or any rules by which the application of an arbitrary mode of criticism could ever be justified. They have invented for Adam a promised immortality which is not asserted here, ascribing to the death here announced a spiritual character of which there is a like absence of all trace. An arbitrary prohibition to eat of the fruit of a particular tree, they have made a universal and everlasting moral law. They have identified the Deity that walked in the shade of the garden, in the cool of the evening, with the infinite, all-pervading God of the

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Christian religion and of modern philosophy. They have endeavoured to account for the serpent's speech by infusing into him the spirit of a fallen archangel; and, for this purpose, they have had to introduce the previous existence of evil and war in heaven, of which no authentic traces remain, or, if they ever did, could not reach this our globe. They have transformed the general principle of the eventual triumph of good over evil into a personal prediction, in order to introduce their own views of Christ and his atonement; and, through all this racking of what the writer has left us, they have made their way to the construction of their own dark and devastating creed, consisting of the imposition of a law upon man to which he has no power to yield obedience—of the vindictiveness of the Deity, only to be satisfied with the full payment of the penalty for every transgression of such law—of the doctrine of vicariousness, the transference of punishment from one person to another, in violation of all the principles of justice—and of ceaseless torment in an unimaginable hell, into which must be dismissed the far greater portion of the inhabitants of the earth. Thus, by violent criticism, have they arrived at a dire conclusion; and, by the perversion of all genuine and legitimate modes of interpretation, have constructed a creed "at which reason stands aghast, and faith herself is half confounded."

As a relic of that remotest time when speculations like these were unknown, and when individual minds put forth their own powers, reasoning in the efficiency of their own intellect upon the world, upon creation, which was yet fresh to them,—considering it as a document of this nature,—let us now pass through the various topics which in succession it presents for our consideration.

"These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, and every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground. But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground. And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

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The instantaneous creation of plants, contrasted with their gradual formation as described in the preceding account, I have already sufficiently remarked upon. It is worth observing that both this writer and the former one endeavoured to draw a broad distinction between the creation of the inferior kinds of existence and that of man. But though aiming at the same object, they pursued a very different course for its accomplishment. The first writer represents the vegetable creation as the result of spontaneous production under the divine command. He tells us that God said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so." Here we find the language of spontaneous evolution of vegetable life from the material elements that previously existed: while, when the writer of that account comes to the creation of man, it is described as an immediate operation: "God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him: male and female created he them." While, in this account, the formation of vegetable life is represented as instantaneous,—trees and plants are described as created, not produced in the earth, and as only deriving their nourishment from it after this complete, instantaneous, and independent formation,—the formation of man is made a gradual process; and he is formed from the dust, before there is breathed into him a vital or intellectual principle, the breath of life, the spirit of God.

One would think this description quite sufficient to demolish the theories of those who plead for identity of authorship for the two works; for their inspiration and for their identity of fact and doctrine. There is what is worth more than all this—there is an identity of feeling and purpose, though pursued by opposite modes; and an identity which makes us do honour to both minds, while we observe their diversity. Each desired to mark his reverence for human nature. Although one made the plants of instantaneous creation, and man as formed by a process of two or

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more stages; and the other represented the plants as of spontaneous production by the earth, and man as of immediate creation,—yet both have so arranged their descriptions as that the effect is one and the same; and the impression on the mind is, that the formation of man was the grandest work of this extraordinary process. They afford illustrations of the universal truth, that the greatest minds—those most elevated above the mass of their contemporaries—have the lowliest reverence for human nature; they have ever seen, best seen, what its capacities, powers, and tendencies are,—how noble is its constitution—how much of beauty it evolves in its course, even when that course is most erring and most darkling—and how glorious the destiny towards which it is advancing. And happy is it when this reverence is reciprocated, and when the many learn what they owe to the few, and pay it with a heart as cheerful and a spirit as willing as that in which the few render their homage to the universality of our nature. It indicates a time when mind and morals are advancing, and when man has the fairest prospect of well enjoying the heritage which God has given him upon the earth, and of looking beyond that heritage to his better, spiritual, and everlasting possession.

"And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads. The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; and the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone. And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia. And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates."

By these signs, geographical theologians have endeavoured, with infinite diligence, to trace the exact site of Eden; but the diversity of their conclusions gives little encouragement to any renewal of the process. It is a matter which can only be left as we find it; and probably

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the writer has merely designated the locality by grouping together the streams most celebrated, according to the geographical knowledge of his time, by bringing them into a contiguity which they did not really possess, and thus filling the imagination with a scene which had no correspondent reality on the surface of the earth. But he made the region of his abode of innocence a paradise—a common designation of the state which is to come, as of that which has passed by, and which has been with remarkable uniformity described under this designation.

The notion of a paradise, a beautifully laid-out garden, as a scene to be haunted by the spirits of the blest, remained with the Jews through many generations. We find it adverted to in the New Testament. Analogous to this were the pale, moonlit Elysian fields of the Greeks, where happy and pure spirits had their abode; and where, if there was little to stimulate, yet was there a melancholy grace over all, in which their imaginations took delight. The Mahometan paradise is of a more gorgeous description; and vegetation is portrayed by the Koran as putting forth all its growth and its full luxuriance—couches are spread for the true believers, rich fruits tempt their hands, and there is all that can gladden the senses in amplest abundance. Only once, perhaps, in this world's mental history, for a short time, and under the power of peculiar circumstances, was heaven looked forward to as a city. Crowded habitations, necessary first for the purpose of security, and afterwards continued for the purposes of trade, commerce, and manufacture,—these have always reacted on men's minds to inspire a longing after the fair and fresh and open scenes of nature—after these in their primal beauty and in their pictured order—so as to give the idea of paradisiacal gardens or Elysian fields. It was when the Jews were anticipating the overthrow of their temple, city, and polity—it was when the Roman authority was putting on its most lowering frowns—it was when the Roman armies were beginning to muster for that fatal march which, encompassing the holy city, was to bar escape from it, and fill it with the long endurance of famine, of terror, and of bloodshed, until at length the devouring flame was to wrap all, and the ploughshare was to pass over it,—it was then that the vigorous imagination which adorned the scenes of the Apocalypse

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made heaven a glorious city, its gates and walls of silver and precious stones, its streets of gold, its river a water of life proceeding from the throne of God. Such was the scene where those for whom a Jerusalem on earth existed no longer, might find still continued what was so endeared to them by their associations, and might anticipate a heaven that was to be their New Jerusalem coming down from the clouds, and shedding its brilliance, the lustre of its towers and temple, over the surface of the earth. But, ordinarily, those feelings of human nature have prevailed which lead a man who has toiled through long years in the counting-house and warehouse, the mart or exchange, in order to accumulate enough wherewith to repose in quiet, to place the scene of his last days in the country rather than in the town, in the garden rather than in the street—these are the feelings that have led men to look forward to another life under similar imagery, yet often making the same mistake, and not preparing for that state by a regular discipline of the mind and spirit, so as to fit them for its enjoyment when the period for its possession should arrive.

A tree of life—a tree (to borrow the imagery in the Revelation) whose fruit is immortal, and whose leaves are for the healing of the nations—must, of course, be the central object of such a celestial paradise, and we find it anticipated here in the paradise of primæval theology. The tree of knowledge has been generally reckoned one of the puzzles of this mythos, and there have been conflicting interpretations, not wanting those which give the whole composition thereby a turn against the progress of intellect and the enlargement of information. I think I shall be able to show, in the course of this exposition, that the writer had no feeling or purpose of this nature—that by the serpent he typified idolatry in its maleficent influence; and by the tree of knowledge, that notion of knowledge which was then associated with idolatry, and which constituted one of its greatest temptations—for idolatry ever held forth a temptation of this description—a deceitful inducement, which only ended in degradation and death. Wherever we find idolatry, we find pretensions to preternatural knowledge—the practice of divination—the notion of an insight into futurity from watching the flight of birds,

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from dissecting the entrails of beasts, or from taking the chances of the divining-cup—professions of oracular wisdom, supposed responses from fabled gods, by which men had promises or threatenings held out to them for the purpose of influencing their actions—nay, pretending even to call the dead from their graves, to catechise their corpses, and gain from them information of coming events, as practised by the witch of Endor in the raising of Samuel to act on the mind of the tyrant Saul, and of which so many other instances exist in history or legends. In these practices we may recognise a tree of knowledge that, when gained, could only pervert the taste, pollute the soul, lead the mind astray from real wisdom, entangle it in doubt and darkness, despair and spiritual death.

Legend supplies us with a history, unauthentic indeed, but poetically true, of the two celebrated trees of the paradise in which God placed Adam. A branch, they tell us, of the tree of life was brought away by an angel—was given to Seth, who planted it: it was upon wood taken from it that Moses elevated the serpent in the wilderness; and from the same tree he derived the wood which purified the bitter waters, and rendered them the means of refreshment and strength and gladness to the Israelites in their long passage through the desert. And of this wood, too, they tell us, the rod was made with which Moses pointed out to his expectant hosts the land of promise, which, after his death, they were to possess; the rod which he waved over the Red Sea, and made a broad highway for them to pass free out of the wilderness, while the waters closed over the ferocious hosts of their pursuing oppressors. While of the tree of knowledge, when Adam died, Seth, as a sad memorial, planted a slip upon his grave; and of this wood was made the cross upon which Christ was crucified, when he died the victim of human prejudice, ignorance, and malignity—died for the world's redemption from false knowledge to the true, from its state of despondency and darkness to that of animation and of hope.

I need scarcely refer to the beautiful amplification of the description which our own bard of *Paradise Lost* has given in his work, and which is, doubtless, familiar to most of you. In his description of paradise—in the tangled forestry by which it is approached, spreading itself widely

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over the surrounding country, and forming the first barrier against aggression—in the gradual ascent covered with trees —in the green and high-raised mound by which paradise is represented as encircled—in the diversity of its surface, the fair variety of hill and plain, of wood and lake, of green and sunny spots which he describes, and the flocks gathering therein, and the variety in which the flowers are scattered over it, growing with no regard to artificial rules or distribution—and in its cool grots and shady recesses, and all that makes it most adapted to satisfy the imagination,—the bard of *Paradise Lost* drew on no realities, on nothing that recollection could bring to his mind from the stores that with the sense of sight, while he possessed it, he had gathered up. He showed himself, in this particular, in advance of his age,—in his notion of the best mode of producing enjoyment, as well as in the higher topics to which his work relates,—and he embodied some of the principles which, in later times, destroyed the formality of the ancient garden, dissipated the false taste in which man had used his power over the material world, and led to a simpler, a better, a truer, as well as a more poetical and more pictorial, mode of dealing with nature, by rendering art the means of eliciting her beauties.

"And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

The interpretation of this prohibition, according to the clue I have just given, and the evidence for which will appear more largely in a subsequent part of the exposition, is an admonition given against idolatry—that idolatry which Moses was so earnest to warn the Israelites against —that idolatry which was not identified with theology or with speculative error, but with the worst vices and the most debasing tyrannies that have ever oppressed humanity —that was in itself a sort of sum and summary of the operation of the principle of evil, against which every good man had to struggle. The injunction to labour, the very purpose for which man was placed in paradise, in what is called his state of innocence, shows us that, in

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the view of the writer—and I take his view to have been a very sound one—labour is not in itself a curse to human nature. Something of it is necessary to elicit the full powers, physical or mental, of humanity. A state of mere indolence will also be a state of ignorance, a state of viciousness; and if there be those—as, unhappily, there always have been—whose frames are overtasked, and whose minds are precluded from the full development of their powers, who are the mere hewers of wood and drawers of water for the sole advantage of others,—the tendency of society should be to remedy the evil, not by vain dreams of equal participation that cannot be realised, but by such a distribution as shall afford to all the advantages of labour as well as the blessings of enjoyment and of mental cultivation. Rich as are the productions of Oriental genius, and beautiful as are the remains of that classic taste which, in a less favourable, but still an abundantly genial, clime, put forth its powers, it was needful, in the intellectual annals of the world, that these should be blended with the sterner reflectiveness of the sterile path, in order, by the synthesis of all, to elicit what is best in man in his spiritual nature, whatever is noblest in his philosophy or his principles.

I shall here break off the exposition, to continue it next Sunday morning; only adding, that I think Dr. Geddes, in taking from this mythos a most unfavourable view of the purposes of Moses in incorporating it with his code of laws, and representing him as keeping the people in darkness in order the better to govern them, has been most unjust towards the character of the Hebrew lawgiver and that of the Mosaic institutions. If ever there was a legislator raised far above an imputation of this kind, it was the author of those institutions. He invested the people with that freedom which can never be the companion of ignorance. They had even the power of determining, of changing as they pleased, the form of their government—of making it monarchical or republican, as suited their own convictions—a power which would never be given, which would never be recognised, by a legislator who intended to subdue and govern a people merely through their ignorance or their superstition. He provided for a literary tribe, the Levites, who were the scribes and

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chroniclers, the professional men, the artists, the philosophers of Judæa, as well as its theological teachers, and who, by the Jewish arrangements, were raised above the necessity of toil, while yet endowed with nothing that could approximate towards wealth, and were put in the most favourable position for the instruction of the population at large. He enjoined the ceaseless instruction of the young. He connected it with their different religious observances. Parents were told to be ever ready to give an answer when an inquiry was made, "Why do you do this?" and as they stood with their loins girt, eating the paschal lamb, they were to recount to the youngest child that could ask the reason, the particulars of that eventful history. We may affirm that the young of no other country, perhaps, on the face of the earth ever could have had such a knowledge of the history of their own nation from the earliest times, as the Jews must have possessed, in consequence of the laws and institutions by which the conduct of their teachers was regulated: and thus it was that Moses formed, amongst a people who had been a mere tribe of slaves, those who could go forth as the world's teachers in religion and morality.

Now, there is little reason to impute hostility to real knowledge to a mind like his; and would that zeal equal to his, would that a wisdom as far-sighted and provident as his, could be found in the legislation of countries that claim for themselves the more exalted title of enlightened and civilised and Christian! would that there were not in our own land so much of hope deferred in struggling for any thing like an extension of education, for any thing approaching to national education, against which sectarianism and prejudice every where raise their heads, and oppose obstacles from which the boldest shrink back, half convinced that they are never to be surmounted.

I remarked that this mythos was not to be built upon for purposes of theological dogma. It is no basis on which can be placed the foundation of an everlasting creed. It is not even a sure resting-place for historical truth, because its form is not historical, but allegorical or mythical. Its facts are facts of the mind, facts of serious speculation and feeling, and not those of external and material occurrence. But there is so much in it associating itself with the

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truth of external facts in the world's history, that we can have little doubt that, in conformity with the account here given of the origin of man, all his diversities, all the varieties of colour and of tribe that have since been realised, do not mark a different species of beings, but are only varieties that have been perpetuated and multiplied, leading us back to the same parents as the common progenitors of the human race; thus giving physical truth to one of the most affecting principles of moral philosophy, rendering literal the fraternity which we bear to those of every clime and region, giving a species of vitality to the maxims of Christian morals that cannot but add to their force and surround them with beauty, and realising even in the anticipation of so remote a period the influences of that religion which teaches that "all we are brethren," and that "God hath formed of one blood all the nations of men to dwell on the whole face of the earth."

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THE SECOND AND THIRD CHAPTERS OF GENESIS.

No. II.

May 20th, 1838.

I HAVE now to finish the exposition of the second and third chapters of the book of Genesis, which was broken off last Sunday morning at the 17th verse of the second chapter. The remainder of this narrative—at least, after the concluding portion of the second chapter—does not, like that which precedes, resolve itself into different paragraphs, containing distinct topics; but is more continuous. I shall, therefore, first pass rapidly through it, in making the comments which will generally, though not exclusively, belong to the literal meaning; and then make two or three concluding observations on what I think to be the tendency and spirit of this mythos.

We commence now at the 18th verse of the 2d chapter: "And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him." The transaction here described, of naming the animals, is one of the proofs rested upon by those whose theological doctrines imply the absolute perfection of the first man in what is called his state of innocence. They adduce this as an instance of his possessing intellectual, as well as moral, powers and attainments in a state that corresponds with, or rather, in their view, goes beyond, the highest advances that have been made in intelligence and civilisation. It is but a narrow basis for

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such a theory to rest upon. In whatever way we explain the narrative, the names which man first gave to animals would be imitative of the sounds of their cries, or would have reference to their form or motion. Nor is the narrative particularly coherent with what must have been the fact in this account. How should the names thus imposed on animals be retained by them? How would they bear them about, or suggest them to those by whom they were afterwards seen? Animals have obtained names in proportion as they came under the observation of mankind, and different names as they came under the observation of men of different tribes, inhabiting different countries, and speaking different languages. A nomenclature of the animal kingdom, fashioned on principles of a rational estimate of their nature and their qualities, is what the world has yet to consider, and what, assuredly, we have no reason to imagine that Adam could possibly be possessed of in the garden of Eden. This supposition of the extraordinary knowledge of the first man—who must have been helpless and ignorant—is of a piece with the other theories that have been coupled together in order to supply one of the most extraordinary schemes of dogma that have been imposed on the world. It belongs to the same class as the Jewish fables of the books which Adam wrote—or of those which fell down from heaven for his instruction, which were said to be buried in his grave, and were afterwards found there by the patriarch Abraham.

"And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed." The seeming incongruity of this description of the creation of woman with the account which is given in the 1st chapter —where the creation of both is described as occurring at the very same time, and, by implication, in the same mode —has always puzzled commentators who assign both to

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the same author, and who make a literal belief in both essential to salvation. The Jews fashioned a legend to get over the difficulty. They supposed the formation of Eve to be the second creation of woman; and in their rabbinical stories, no obscure part is acted by the fabled Lillith, the first wife of Adam, who seems, in their view, to have been a representation of intellectual power starting out of its sphere and blazing like a comet over the world. Lillith is said to have learned from Adam the name of Deity—the most holy name—the name of four letters, which were supposed by the Jews to possess a magic power; with these to have wrought strange wonders—to have departed from Eden—to have dwelt in the Red Sea, in the place where the Egyptian host was overwhelmed in its pursuit of the Israelites—to abide still in the clouds—and, altogether, to typify an intellectual spirit acting in a manner different from the ordinary workings of the human mind and of the laws of moral action, calculated to startle and surprise, and in some measure to form a striking contrast with the woman afterwards presented to us in the history of Eve. In old times, when a difficulty was to be grappled with, they got over it by a legendary story. The moderns get over it by a forced criticism. Where they invented fictitious adventures, the moderns apply all their art to torture words into different meanings. The course of the ancients is perhaps not less reasonable than that of the moderns, and is certainly more amusing.

It is said by Bishop Warburton, in his *Divine Legation of Moses,* that "rib" was the Egyptian hieroglyphic mark for wife. If so, we may take this as one of the many indications that, though written by a descendant of Abraham, the narrative was composed by one who lived in Egypt, whose mind was nurtured according to Egyptian training, and rich in the stores of Egyptian learning. Matthew Henry, in his *Commentary,* in reference to this circumstance, says: "Not from his head, to be his ruler; nor from his foot, to be trampled on; but from his side, to be cherished in affection." It is a comment which well accords with the character and general tendency of the writings of that worthy and amiable critic. The Hindoos have a different notion of the origin of mankind. They say, that from the head of Bramah sprang priests or monarchs—from his

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arms, soldiers—from his feet, the lower classes, who are to be trampled on in order to subserve the purpose of both the other classes. Such an exposition well accords with the tendency of Oriental tyranny; while the Hebrew legend —in deriving all mankind from one parent, and uniting them in the bonds of literal brotherhood—accords with the more beneficent spirit of Christianity. The purpose of woman's creation, as described in Genesis, was to form, not a slave or property, but a "help meet" for Adam. We may infer, therefore, that the writer looked to the agency of woman in the affairs of life as something higher than servile ministration, and that he did not regard her as merely a species of possession, as was too common in Eastern countries.

The third chapter commences a fresh narrative: "Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made." We find no mention here of any demon, any fallen angel or archangel, any spirit of evil, as incorporate in the serpent; the animal alone is what the writer appears to contemplate: and such is the exposition of the Jewish historian Josephus. He tells us that all animals in paradise had one language; and, although we do not admit such a theory as historical or natural fact, we may assuredly take it as an assumed fact in the mythos which we are now endeavouring to interpret. "And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die." In the dialogue here introduced, the name of the Deity is changed. We no longer read of the Lord God, Jehovah Elohim, but of the Gods—the plural appellation of the Deity;—that is, as soon as the dialogue between the serpent and the woman commences, they speak the language of idolatry, and not that of monotheism. It is also worth noticing, that in this temptation, so dexterously managed, considering the brevity with which it is recorded, the serpent begins with simply questioning, and not denying or impugning, the command given, and the threatening with which it was accompanied; and having excited idolatrous and polytheistic associations

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by the use of the plural name of the Deity, he merely asks: "Hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" while the woman, on whom these suggestions seem to be already commencing their operation, is not content with merely repeating the prohibition, but actually interpolates it—adds to it a strengthening clause which was not in the original language: "God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, *neither shall ye touch it*, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil:" flattering the object of his temptation with the idea of envy in the Deity—an insinuation which shows the low species of theology, although monotheistic, which runs through this narrative. "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her: and he did eat." The combination of motives which is generally found in acts that bear any analogy to this, in the conscious departure from a command or rule of right, is here beautifully indicated. The inducement appears to be made up of a great variety of heterogeneous considerations—a notion of envy in the Power that had prohibited the indefinite good to be obtained by eating of the fruit, the appearance of the tree itself, its pleasantness to the eyes, its desirableness as ministering both to physical and to intellectual gratification, and, finally, a species of benevolence in inviting Adam also to partake thereof. "And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig-leaves together, and made themselves aprons." Here, too, we may observe the knowledge of human nature which the writer evinces. Incaution in reference to appearances is the attribute of innocence. It is guilt and aberration that are ever alive to a regard for them—that are ever anxious to maintain them in such a way as that they shall be the least questionable. "And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day"—a clap of thunder which terrified them, say the commentators, who resolve every thing into a literal explanation: "and Adam and his wife hid themselves,"—

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in this we see a specimen of the narrow theology ascribed to them,—"and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden. And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat." Here, again, we have the common process of guilt; we have its grovelling apprehensiveness, its vain attempts, first, to keep up appearances, and then to offer excuses; its shrinking from an open facing of the Power from whose precepts it had departed; its disposition to transfer the culpability from one person to another, each party endeavouring at self-excuse by magnifying the influence exercised by others. Taking the order of the offence as that they had themselves indicated, the sentence of the judge commences with the last named, and thus proceeds: "And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life." This indicates the writer's notion of the serpent as an animal differing in form and habits, as well as in the endowment of speech, from what the serpent tribes became in after times. He supposed it to have had some other species of motion, and a different kind of food; and the curse upon it was, that it should forfeit these, and live in a state of ceaseless hostility to the human race.

"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of

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which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Here, as in the case of the serpent, the implication, of course, is, that what was denounced as pernicious did not exist in their previous condition—that, in woman, child-bearing was without labour; that her subordination to the superior strength of man was not what it afterwards became; and that the toil needful for man, even in the garden of Eden itself—the toil which was necessary to train the plants and reap the fruits of paradise—was nothing in comparison with the labour which would be requisite in order to wring from the more sterile earth the means of sustenance. The sentence inflicted is not, however, the sentence which was denounced—a circumstance which is generally evaded by theologians. Instead of immediate death—the threatening announced—the penalty is commuted for pain and suffering and continuous toil. There is no room for the interpolation of the notion of vicarious suffering, of transferred punishment, of pardon granted through the intervention of another party—there is an exercise of mercy in the very act of the administration of justice—and that which is inflicted shows the lenity of the judge, as well as his adhesion to his own purpose. "And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living." The writer here has interposed a reflection of his own, not very consistent with the fact that Eve is not yet recorded as having borne any children whatever. "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them. And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." Here the writer appears in some embarrass-

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ment, from the collision of his literal and his allegorical materials. He sacrifices divine benevolence, which surely would have allowed man to eat of the tree of life—he sacrifices this—literally in order to make his narrative cohere with the facts he meant to allegorise, and which were, that idolatry, however it might boast of knowledge, was inconsistent with the intellectual, moral, and spiritual life of humanity. This he wished to typify; and in doing so, he has described the Deity as acting in a way not consistent with the beneficence of his nature. There is an obvious allegorical propriety in making the tree of life to be guarded by cherubims —those strange figures, with their four faces and six wings, which were emblematically employed in the Jewish worship, and placed at the ends of the ark of the covenant itself, looking down into it, and seemingly placed there as its particular guardians. They call up associations of Israelitish worship, and represent that worship as containing all that was represented by the tree of life.

The key to this mythos I take to be in the interpretation which we affix to the serpent. In my view of it, the writer takes the serpent as the emblem of idolatry; and the tree of knowledge typifies those inducements towards idolatrous worship which were continually held out by the promise of superior knowledge, to be obtained by watching the flight of birds, or the entrails of sacrificed victims, hearing the voice of oracles, or calling up the dead to give their responses. And the serpent is well selected as the type of idolatry, and of all the evils that flowed from idolatry—as no species of worship, perhaps, has ever exceeded in extent or duration that of serpent-worship. We find it in a thousand different forms throughout the old mythology—typifying a great variety of attributes. It is made the emblem of wisdom, as when serpents were coiled round the head of Minerva. It was the type of eloquence, and thus it graced the caduceus of Mercury. It imaged the healing art, and medical science, and therefore the serpent adorned the staff of Æsculapius. It was significant of revelry and enjoyment, and hence the Thyrsus of Bacchus was twined with the serpent as well as the ivy. It was connected with military power and prowess. The serpent was one of the standards elevated in front of the Roman hosts. Serpents were the objects of divine worship through-

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out antiquity; and the dragons or dragoons of modern times retain in their names a relic of things that have passed away from the world; ages are emblemed in its ever-revolving circles, and the serpent with its tail in its mouth was the emblem of eternity.

We find the Jews so addicted to this worship, that they even connected it with the memorials of one of their own deliverances. The brazen serpent, which Moses raised in the wilderness, became the occasion of idolatrous homage, until it was, on that account, broken in pieces by Hezekiah. There were, also, Christian sects, such as the Ophites, who made serpent-amulets, who held them as charms against disease; and we even find the term serpent-saviour to have been in use among the Egyptians. The head of Isis was wreathed with the serpent, and serpents adorned the robe of the priest and the crown of the monarch. They were deemed sacred animals; and if in any way they were injured, the consciences of those who had even unwittingly committed such injury so wrought upon them, that instances of madness are recorded as having arisen from this circumstance alone. Very often they were fed and guarded with care in their temples, and throughout all the varied imagery of their mythology we find this figure predominant. It was therefore taken by the writer, not merely as the emblem of idolatry in general, but also of that idolatry to which the Israelites, during their residence in Egypt, were peculiarly exposed; and I think, with this general idea, the mythos becomes comparatively, at least, intelligible. This interpretation, as a warning against idolatry, and that promise of knowledge which idolatry made one of its strongest temptations, accords with what we have traced concerning the writer, who evidently was one of those who in succession struggled to keep up in the Israelitish mind a sense of pure worship, and the restriction of religious homage to one God, instead of adoring the multiplicity of beings that the Egyptians honoured. It corresponds with the design of Moses, as well as with that of the more ancient writer of the mythos: for when Moses adopted the work, he was laying the foundation of institutions in which the worship of one God was the paramount feature, which he intended to fix on the Israelitish people, and which was to separate them from other nations. It accords with the tendency of the Jewish

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people, who were relapsing ceaselessly into idolatry; and who, while wandering in the wilderness, and receiving laws which were to bind them and their posterity through all ages, were still looking back to the fleshpots of Egypt, and not only to its means of physical enjoyment, but to its temples and to its worship also. This interpretation accords with what we may presume to have been the natural history of religion in the world, showing us glimpses of a purer system, corrupted into idolatry—the serpent polluting paradise by the promise of a knowledge which religion did not authorise its votaries at that time to anticipate. It accords too with the very spirit and character of the Bible, which is throughout the record of a conflict—an intense and continuous conflict—between monotheism and idolatry, —a conflict kept up by its prophets and writers; and which, as it began in Genesis with the prediction, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head," terminates in the Revelation with warfare in heaven, with triumph over the old serpent, and with anticipations of that mortal blow to idolatry that was then to be given by the purer worship of Christianity.

The prediction in the 15th verse of the 3d chapter—"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel"—has been variously interpreted. It is referred by some to humanity at large; and of humanity generally it is true. It is true not only in a literal sense, in which the progress of industry and civilisation keeps down the reptile races, and gradually confines within narrow limits whatever species of animals are pernicious; but it is true in that larger sense in which man, when stung and wounded, turns on his oppressor, and, in the demolition of his oppressor's power, indicates the plan on which Providence proceeds. It was thus realised when Israel rose against Egypt, when it found its safety in the wilderness, and looked in scorn over the prostrate and destroyed hosts of its pursuers. The Nile is sometimes described as the serpent or dragon river, and its head was bruised or crushed by Israel in its triumphal march forth to enjoy the blessings of the promised land. It has been taken as a personal prediction of Christ; and to him it is applicable, for in him we behold pain and

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endurance, calamity and persecution, which may be described as the serpent's wound; and in the success of his doctrines, and in the prevalence over the world of that immortal hope which he first proclaimed to the people at large, we see the serpent's head bruised, the power of evil receiving a mortal wound from which it has never been able to recover.

But in this sense, also, it is true of all who have suffered for their rights. In the martyrs or confessors of ancient or modern times,—of religious, or political, or social conflict,—to whatever country they belonged, or by whatever names they were distinguished,—wherever man patiently endures, strongly resists, and even through wounds and oppressions and martyrdoms finally triumphs,—there is realised the principle which the author of this mythos has connected with his theory of the first state of humanity. We may consider it even as exemplified in that struggle of the good and evil principle which formed the leading doctrine of so many Oriental systems of philosophy and religion. In Hindostan, to this day, there are tablets representing an individual with an enormous serpent coiled round him, threatening him with destruction, wounding him in the heel; and, in a corresponding tablet, is seen the same individual standing triumphant upon the reptile, throwing its enormous form over him, waving it as a palm-branch of triumph, and crushing in the dust the head by which he had been wounded. They speak to the eye the language of truth—language which bears an interpretation which the human mind and the human heart know well how to recognise—that good is stronger than evil, and that its bitterest endurances are presages of its brightest triumphs.

It is, I think, a beauty in this narrative, that the writer has indicated the time and mode of penitence in its human subjects. The erring pair are recalled to a sense of the offence which they had committed when "the voice of the Lord is heard walking in the garden in the cool of the day." It is by that reflectiveness which the closing day is so adapted to induce, when man retires from the sights and sounds that at other periods occupy his mind and call forth his exertions—it is in the quiet and stillness of his own soul—that the good principle within him is most likely to find its invigorated strength,—that if he have erred, like

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the prodigal in the parable, he comes to himself, his better nature returns upon him, and the voice which he has disregarded in the glory of the day, and amid its bustle, sinks into his heart, moves him to penitence if he has transgressed, fills him with calmness and hope if he has pursued an onward course. And our own poet seems to intimate something like a contrast of this description in the diversified characters of *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained.* One is a poem of external bustle, warfare, description; while the other is throughout one of quiet and intellectual operation. In *Paradise Lost,* we have war in heaven; we have the roaring of thunder, and angelic rebels; we have embattled armies of celestial beings; we have the rout of the rebel angels, cast with hideous ruin and combustion down; we have councils in the courts of heaven, and Satanic leaders haranguing their assembled legions in pandemonium; we have the gates of hell opening and sending their flame and uproar wild into the dark abyss of chaos; we have the earth shaking at the transgression of the first man, and anticipated history rising with all its array of destruction and demolition, of endurance and death, of battle and revolution, through the long vicissitudes of time. While in *Paradise Regained* the scenery is confined to the wilderness solitude: the Saviour sojourns there alone; personified thoughts are the temptations by which he is assailed; meditation and devotion are the armour that he puts on; and internal struggles are the only conflicts which he wages; he quietly, and in reliance on the Divine help, rebuts the suggestions that are made to him; and at last we see the triumph with which the poem concludes;—its celebration of victory is merely the simple feast that is spread for Christ of the fruit of the tree of life, of which he partakes on a grassy bank in the wilderness; while the only acclamations are those of angelic voices softly chanting the paraphrased song of "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good will towards men:" and the poem concludes with telling us that

> "he unobserved
> Home to his mother's house private returned."

Whatever may be the language of the theory of the mythos,—whatever may have been the vain regrets of those whose dissatisfied minds, while endeavouring to burst beyond

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the boundaries of the present, knew not well which way to look,—however they may have regarded the golden and innocent age of humanity in the past,—it has been said, and justly said, that the true golden age is not in the past, but in the future. Man's course is onward. Whatever may be feigned or told of the early progenitors of our race, we trace progression as the law of our nature. Every thing that we can learn of the plan of Providence shows us that the destiny of man is still to press onwards, and that what will best develop his powers and secure his enjoyment is to be found in realising, throughout this long progress, the objects of his being, and in ever more and more closely approximating to that excellence which it will be his aim to reach through all the ages of eternity. To this, therefore, should man look—towards this he is advancing; for this is Providence—that is to say, it is God's preparing. God's true paradise is only yet planting; his Eden is but scarcely mapped out; the trees, whether of knowledge or of life, have hitherto borne but unripe fruit. It is for man's advancing intelligence with care and toil to tend them, looking forward to the time when each shall sit under his own vine and his own fig-tree, none daring to make him afraid. When these fair fruits, of life enduring and of knowledge with no ban upon it, shall be largely and liberally distributed, and the human race, looking back to this story of common parentage, shall rejoice in the fact of a common brotherhood, and recognise that moral law which is founded upon the universal identity of our nature,—then will best be realised the garden of God; for man will find in his own soul his best Eden, rich in the fruits that promise immortality, and which give the best anticipations of future blessedness in the present happiness that they diffuse around.

END OF VOL. X.

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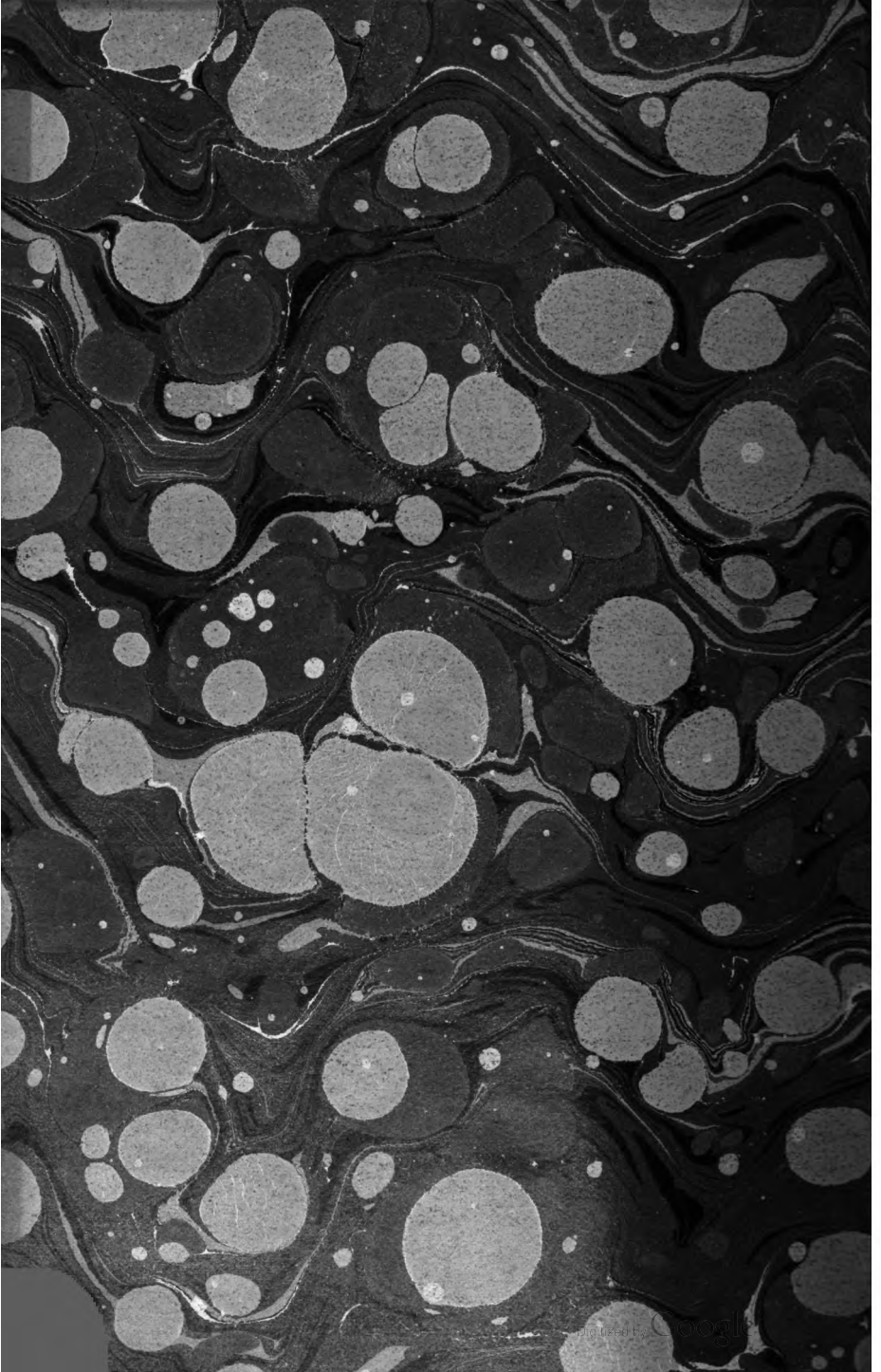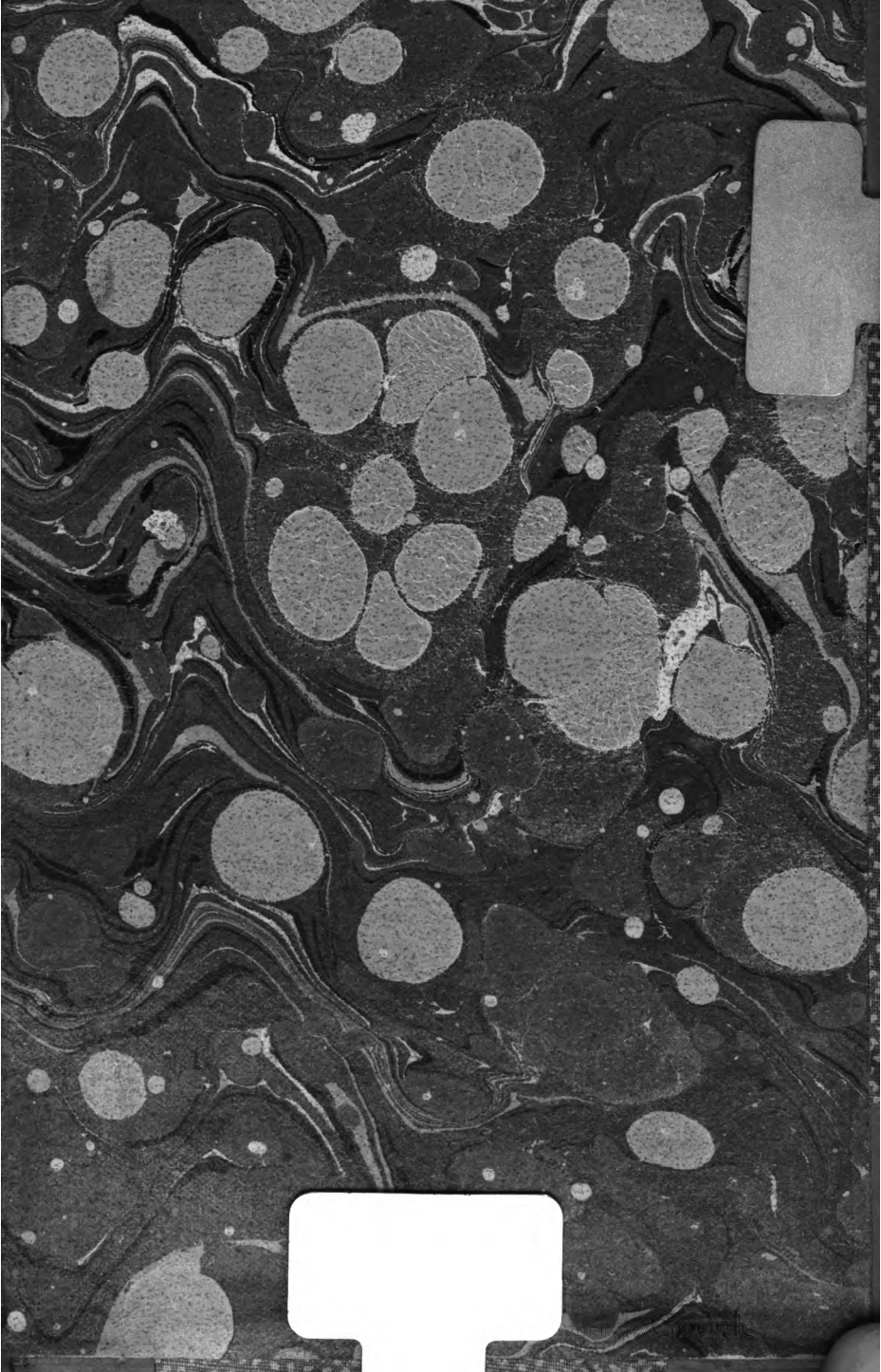
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